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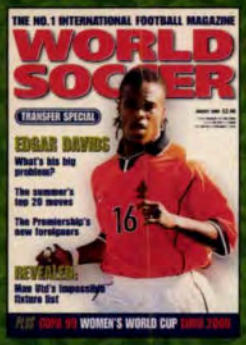

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While English football spent the summer weeks arguing over Manchester United's participation in the first World Club Championship, Italian clubs have been spending money – serious money. As we report on page 22, the top eight clubs in last year's Serie A have all broken their transfer records in recent weeks as they build up their squads for an assault on the expanded European cup competitions.

At the time of writing, United, Arsenal and Chelsea's (lack of) summer signings suggest that they do not realise what is about to hit them. As we point out on page 6, 1999-00 will be a season like no other before it. If you thought last year's fixture list was crowded, you ain't seen nothing yet. Don't say we didn't warn you.

Finally, a word of thanks to Graham Turner, who steps down as our Spanish correspondent this month after many years of service to the magazine. He'll be sorely missed. **Gavin Hamilton, Editor** (gavin_hamilton@ipc.co.uk)

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Keir Radnedge
Executive Editor
COMMENTARY

World body must not be swayed by Asian 2002 boycott threats

Stand firm, FIFA

Watch this space...empty seats remain after the Asian walk-out at FIFA's congress in Los Angeles

IN ANOTHER era, at another time, the squabble over Asia's places at the 2002 World Cup finals would have been considered a storm in a teacup. Asia's demand for five places at Korea/Japan 2002 would have been sorted out in the corridors of FIFA, and few outsiders would have been any the wiser.

Unfortunately, the present squabble has erupted at the most delicate possible time, when who runs world football is a major issue. FIFA is having trouble enough controlling European aspirations fuelled by the super-profits of the Champions League. It cannot allow itself to be seen running scared under pressure from any other source.

Perhaps the Asian nations thought that, because several had played a significant role in propelling Sepp Blatter to the FIFA presidency, they could pull his strings. If that were the case, then they blundered badly and misjudged the man. Blatter has not survived the rigours of more than 20 years as right-hand man to Joao Havelange without learning the techniques of survival and developing a thick skin.

If he gives in to Asian blackmail – which is what the threatened boycott is – then Blatter might as well send for Lennart Johansson and hand UEFA's president the keys to FIFA House itself. He will be a worthless president if he cannot stand up for FIFA – as he did, impressively, in Los Angeles – against the bad-tempered, bad-mannered, politically insensitive delegates of the AFC.

The fall-out from that walk-out by the delegates of the 45 Asian nations at FIFA's extraordinary congress in LA could be far-reaching indeed.

The threat of a boycott of the 2002 World Cup is one thing; the sight of the delegates walking out made an indelible and unfavourable impression on everybody else. Any prospect of a South American concession over the places issue vanished the moment FIFA vice-president Chung Mong-joon and his associates rose from their seats. The walk-out made a diplomatic face-saver all the harder to achieve.

The Asian confederation had the patronising grace to say that Japan and South Korea could remain as active, competitive World Cup hosts. But will anyone want to go there?

The rest of the world game has looked on with irritation at the manner in which the two countries have conducted their semi-detached co-hosting preparations. As Blatter himself once said: "It will be like two World Cups. One in Korea, one in Japan."

It would be quite understandable if a European delegate not only proposes that UEFA withdraw its offer to reduce its automatic allocation to 14 places from 15, but also that Europe seriously considers whether an Asia-hosted World Cup is feasible at all in the present circumstances.

And these include not merely the illogical step of playing a World Cup in a region that is supposed to be boycotting the event but the increasingly vexed question of timing.

Shortly before the movers and shakers flew to Los Angeles from the four corners of the football world, it emerged that Japan and South Korea were pushing hard for the start of the World Cup to be moved forward, from June 8 to May 23. In the present context, with the European international fixture list being expanded to accommodate the redeveloped Champions League and UEFA Cup, that is a non-starter. Blatter, I understand, hopes that a compromise of June 1 can be agreed.

But why has this issue only been pressed seriously now? Surely the hosts knew about the rainy season when they launched their World Cup bids. They could have foreseen the problem. Or would it be just too cynical to suggest that they kept quiet for fear that they would spoil their prospects of gaining host rights? I cannot see any way in which Europe can, at this late stage, redesign its fixture calendar. The decision would have to be taken right now to start the 2000-01 season somewhere back in July. And I don't see that happening.

For one thing, UEFA is tiring of its role as perpetual givers. As Belgium's Michel D'Hooghe said after UEFA had volunteered that its 15th country should play off against Asia's fifth for a berth in the finals: "Why is it always UEFA that gives way when these problems arise? That is not fair. It cannot go on like this."

Now D'Hooghe is not a renowned firebrand within UEFA. Quite the opposite. He has been around a long time and generally takes a fair view of the greater picture. When even D'Hooghe is provoked into drawing a line in the sand, then you can bet other people are feeling a great deal hotter under the collar.

The issue of Asian places is one that has been raised before in these columns. My particular feeling is that nothing has happened over the past year or two to justify Asian representation leaping from four nations to five. A mere two correspondents wrote in to express their opposition to my views, in terms – I am sorry to say – that did their cause no good.

The problem is a basic one and concerns the FIFA philosophy regarding the World Cup. Endeavour, of course, has to be rewarded with places in the finals, but then the World Cup is also football's greatest promotional tool so everyone should have a place at the table. But the long-established balance should be varied only according to achievement – and the achievements of the Asian nations in the finals over the years have been negligible.

If anyone has a justified grievance over the allocation of World Cup places in 2002 it is not Asia but Oceania. That region should have at least one guaranteed place at the finals, and should have been granted it a long time ago. Hopefully, FIFA will make up for lost time when it comes round to allocating places for the finals of 2006 – wherever they may be held.

While on the subject of 2006, it is fair to say that another consequence of the Los Angeles fall-out will be to weaken the prospects of South Africa and Morocco.

The effect of the Asian walk-out was to provoke a backlash in the whispering galleries of Los Angeles in which the don't-knows suddenly appreciated the dangers of FIFA taking its prize events to volatile corners of the world.

Just look at the fiascos caused by late cancellations at the world youth tournaments in Ecuador and Nigeria.

The Asian walk-out was good news for England and Germany, reminding delegates that the World Cup in 2006 can go to a secure venue after all. Indeed, England could just about stage the World Cup in 2002 if the Asians insisted on throwing the rattle out of the pram.

Either way, the AFC created this crisis: it is the responsibility of the AFC and not UEFA or CONMEBOL to solve it.

Wembley winners...but United won't be parading the FA Cup this season

Hysterics hide dash for cash

I HAVE no doubt that Manchester United should compete in the World Club Championship in Brazil next January.

But it has nothing to do with England's 2006 World Cup bid; it has everything to do with the legacy of Sir Matt Busby. He took United into the European Cup in the teeth of domestic opposition in the mid-1950s and I believe he would have seen a world club championship as a logical next step.

Whether it is necessary for United to drop out of the FA Cup is more questionable. But I do not believe that it will be devalued by their absence, just as I do not believe that it is devalued when United are knocked out in the third round.

I reject utterly the hysterical fuss which pretends that United are bigger than the FA Cup itself. They are not. Indeed, United's dominance of the competition is a modern affair and the FA Cup was none the worse before United's present generation came along.

In one sense the FA was unlucky. This coming season is the first for which, to help adjust to the expanded European competitions, it was decided to pull back the third round of the FA Cup, at which the top clubs enter, to December from early January. If the traditional dates had still applied, then it might have been quite simple to award United a bye through the third round.

Consider this, however. United are a plc and demand a steady, guaranteed cash flow. That can be achieved by their competing in the Champions League every season and that, in turn, can be guaranteed only if they finish no lower than third in the domestic championship each year.

And how could they do that? Simple – by concentrating on the League to the detriment of FA and League Cups.

● *See Libero, page 6-7*

Hero Bobby comes back home

WELCOME back, Bobby Robson. The man who took England within a penalty shoot-out of the 1990 World Cup Final has completed his service with PSV Eindhoven and become mentor to England's coaching team. It's as if the FA had been reading my mind when I argued that Kevin Keegan needed a wise old head to help battle with the foreign football intellectuals.

Coaching mentor...Bobby Robson

Delivering own goal

A LADY in North London is one of the vast army of Newcastle fans who support, indeed worship, their team from afar. When Newcastle reached the FA Cup Final she sat in front of the television surrounded by the various Newcastle mementoes she has collected down the years.

The woman concerned had just come through a traumatic two years, nursing her husband through sadly terminal illness. It was her birthday recently. A friend thought that it might cheer her a little if Newcastle United could send her some sort of greeting, perhaps a signed birthday card.

He duly wrote to the club. Newcastle wrote back, regretting that they were unable to undertake such gestures. Yet someone had taken the trouble to write back and say so. Would it not have been just as easy to send a card or a picture?

More and more Premier League clubs are realising that fans appreciate the small gestures. Obviously, that shaft of light has yet to penetrate the black and white fortress in the north-east. But then, as two of their directors proved, Newcastle United take their fans' loyalty insultingly for granted. How tacky.

Britain's missed opportunities

'SCORING FOR BRITAIN' is the sort of title that might alert the books editor on, say, *The Sun* or *Daily Star*.

In fact, the recently published volume is an academic study subtitled 'International Football and International Politics 1900-1939'. Written by Peter Beck, professor of international history at Kingston University (Frank Cass, £42.50 hardback, £18.50 paperback), it is not an easy read, its academic style making much of it dry in the extreme.

However, hidden away are some nuggets that should make the book required reading for all those who have, at any time, written or compiled World Cup histories. The conclusion to be drawn is that the British government and establishment, in the first half of this century, never understood the propaganda potential of international sport, even when ambassadors reported back on how other countries used sport for political and social ends.

Germany and Italy were two obvious examples, as this book underlines by using on its front cover the picture of England's players giving the Nazi salute before the famous 6-3 win over Germany in Berlin in 1938 (a match that Hitler did not attend, contrary to popular legend).

The fuss over that salute has reverberated down the years; forgotten is the fact, dug out by Beck, that England players also gave the fascist salute to all four corners of the ground when they drew 2-2 with Italy in Milan in 1939.

Beck comments that better records and sources on his subject were to be found among foreign federations and FIFA than in England, and throws some light on attempts to involve England in the three pre-war World Cups, at a time when the four home nations were officially outside FIFA after a row over broken-time payments to amateurs.

In 1929 the Uruguayan federation formally invited England to compete at the inaugural World Cup finals a year later. The FA's International Selection Committee considered the invitation briefly. FA secretary Frederick Wall wrote back, curtly: "I am instructed to express regret at our inability to accept the invitation."

Nowadays, being outside FIFA means automatic non-entry to the World Cup. But it was a different game in those days. In April 1933 Ivo Schricker, representing FIFA at the Scotland v England game, sounded out the home associations about contesting the 1934 World Cup finals in Italy. Letters were exchanged and Schricker was so keen that he guaranteed England and Scotland direct entry to the finals – something denied to even hosts Italy – plus coverage of travel and accommodation expenses.

Talking point...England give the Nazi salute in Berlin in 1938

In the end, of course, they decided against it. But it had nothing to do with travel logistics: England undertook a close-season continental tour in which they played some of the finalists only days before the World Cup opened.

The British associations were invited again in 1938. FIFA started the invitations ball rolling in late 1936 and it was in March 1937 that the FA decided to stay aloof. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland could have entered but slavishly followed the FA's lead.

FIFA responded, according to Beck, by offering a place in the finals to a Great Britain team such as had appeared at the Berlin Olympics. This was rejected, for fear it might compromise the international individuality of the four home FAs. Where FIFA is concerned, *plus ça change...*

Havelange is to blame for the World Club shambles, says Keir Radnedge

Weighed down

Treble chance...United have sacrificed a domestic trophy in the pursuit of international glory next season

MANCHESTER UNITED's decision to step out of the FA Cup was not taken lightly. What most observers and fans have yet to grasp is the sheer weight of fixtures that will burden all Europe's top clubs this coming season.

Domestic cup competitions have never been the most popular of events in the vast majority of countries. England, Scotland, France, Germany and Spain have strong cup traditions, but few other countries do. Indeed, many put up with the nuisance of a knock-out cup only because it provided another avenue into Europe through the now-defunct Cup-winners Cup.

Within a few years, Manchester United may be seen to have led the way in sorting out the pragmatic priorities for any club with mainstream aspirations.

Within hours of winning the European Cup against Bayern Munich, United set in motion a study of how to compete on seven fronts this coming season: in World Club Championship, World Club Cup, European Supercup, Champions League, Premiership, FA Cup and League Cup.

The FA and the Sports Minister, Tony Banks, were confident that, with a little help from a computer, everything could be sorted. That proved impossible, and United felt they had no alternative but to choose between events.

The club has long written down the value of the League Cup and now the FA Cup has gone the same way. But then, as soon-to-be-ennobled manager Alex Ferguson said: "What else could we do? You cannot go on and on adding fixtures. Something had to give.

"I am very sorry about it because the FA Cup is special to me – it was the first trophy I won with United. But we have an opportunity to do something very special for the good of the English game and we could not turn it down."

England will not gain World Cup votes through United's appearance at the World Club Championship. But they would have been an easy target if United had turned the event down. Germany and South Africa would have been justified in accusing England of playing an uneven game, particularly in the wake of the controversy over England's failure to send a full-strength side to the World Youth Cup in Nigeria.

All these issues have to be seen in the context of the extra pressure being imposed by the expansion of the remaining European club competitions. Only a handful of midweek dates between the start of September and the end of May now remain free – mostly in January and February, which is winter break time for most of Europe.

Clearly, European football has reached saturation point. Only rich clubs with big squads can cope; and English clubs, with their heavy domestic demands, may suffer more than most.

It may also be worth considering the hidden pressures which will weigh on United's season through competing for the inaugural world club crown in Brazil. The fall-out in terms of travel fatigue could be much more draining than expected. So United can say it makes sense to ease fixture strain on the second half of the season – which is what their absence from the FA Cup will achieve.

And who do we have to thank for this complication? Not FIFA president Sepp Blatter, not Sports Minister Banks, but veteran Brazilian administrator Joao Havelange. He is now retired after 24 years as the dictatorial president of FIFA, but his is the long, brooding shadow cast over the first World Club Championship.

Six years ago, looking at his worldwide empire, Havelange told his acolytes: "When I became president FIFA had only the World Cup. Now we have a World Youth Cup, a World Juniors Cup, a World Cup for women, an Indoor World Cup...all we need is a World Cup for clubs to complete the set."

Havelange said later that he had been "thinking out loud". But his thoughts went down particularly well in Africa and Asia, where football politicians resented the way the one-off clash of European and South American champions in Tokyo each December was considered the unofficial world club championship.

European football leaders dismissed the idea out of hand and it was put in cold storage. In December 1996, however, when Havelange announced his impending retirement as FIFA president, virtually his last executive decision

Dream fulfilled...Joao Havelange

was to instruct Blatter, then general secretary, to turn the dream into reality. Blatter, now Havelange's successor as president, fulfilled his orders, and that is why the event will be launched next January. Havelange's founding influence always made Brazil favourite to be inaugural host – and it is highly likely that the trophy will be the Joao Havelange Cup.

Havelange will appreciate the gesture but what many English fans may think of it is another matter entirely.

For one thing, the status of the event needs attention if it is to be maintained. Manchester

United will represent Europe but the need to rearrange domestic fixtures around the world means that few other clubs will be reigning champions.

South America, for example, will be represented by Brazil's Vasco da Gama – not by the newly-crowned continental champions, Palmeiras. The World Club Cup holders will be among the eight finalists, but not the winners from Tokyo this coming November but last year's holders, Real Madrid, complete with Steve McManaman.

Asia will send their 1998 Supercup winners, but whether Africa, Oceania and Central/North America can send this year's or last year's champion clubs remains uncertain. The African confederation has said it wants the 1999 Champions League winners to enter, but they will not be known until December – and the deadline for nominations is October 3. ASEC of Ivory Coast already have appealed for CAF to nominate them as the present holders.

The Brazilian confederation, as host, had the right to choose its own representative. It opted for national champions Corinthians of Sao Paulo – even though the national championship is something of a joke tournament, perpetually undermined by political intrigue.

The format for the world championship will be based on two groups of four clubs, one centred on Maracana in Rio de Janeiro and one on Morumbi stadium in Sao Paulo. The group winners will then meet in the Final at Maracana. Whether semi-finals can be squeezed in is doubtful. Even the venue for the Final is questionable given the poor structural state of the stadium that once welcomed 200,000 fans for the 1950 World Cup Final. Bits and pieces have been falling off Maracana ever since, and even Havelange has said that "the best thing to do with Maracana is blow it up and start all over again".

That is one of the reasons why Brazil are no longer considered serious rivals to England, Germany and South Africa in the bidding race for the 2006 World Cup.

So Real Madrid and Manchester United will be flying into the largely unknown next January. What is certain is that, for all the publicly-expressed doubts of UEFA president Lennart Johansson, the World Club Championship is here to stay. Once FIFA has entered the club competition world it will not step back.

The event may not take place every January. That happens to be a convenient date for the initial hosts, because it is the nearest to a close season that Brazil has. Later fixture and climate demands will vary the date, depending on the host country.

But the need for Europe's clubs to take a pragmatic view of what is and what is not possible will NOT vary.

'You can't go on and on adding fixtures. Something had to give' – Alex Ferguson

Big game hunters...Real Madrid, the world club champions, will join Manchester United in Brazil

THE 1999-2000 FIXTURE OVERLOAD

Midweek matches through the season

Mon-Fri	Games scheduled
Jul 12-16	UCL* 1st qual rnd, 1st legs
Jul 19-23	UCL 1st qual rnd, 2nd legs
Jul 26-30	UCL 2nd qual rnd, 1st legs
Aug 2-6	UCL 2nd qual rnd, 2nd legs
Aug 9-13	UCL 3rd qual rnd, 1st legs;
	plus UEFA Cup qual, 1st legs
Aug 16-20	free
Aug 23-27	UCL 3rd qual rnd, 2nd legs;
	plus UEFA Cup qual, 2nd legs;
	plus European Supercup: Man Utd v Lazio
	in Monaco (Aug 27)
Aug 30-Sep 3	free (Euro Chmp quals)
Sep 6-10	free (Euro Chmp quals)
Sep 13-17	Euro club ties
Sep 20-24	Euro club ties
Sep 27-Oct 1	Euro club ties
Oct 4-8	free (Euro Chmp quals)
Oct 11-15	free (Euro Chmp quals)
Oct 18-22	Euro club ties
Oct 25-29	Euro club ties
Nov 1-5	Euro club ties
Nov 8-12	free
Nov 15-19	free (Euro Chmp play-offs)
Nov 22-26	Euro club ties
Nov 29-Dec 3	free
Dec 6-10	Euro club ties
Dec 13-17	free
Dec 20-24	free
Dec 27-31	free
2000	
Jan 3-7	free (World Club Championship, Jan 5-14)
Jan 10-14	free (World Club Championship concludes)
Jan 17-21	free
Jan 24-28	free
Jan 31-Feb 4	free
Feb 7-11	free
Feb 14-18	free
Feb 21-25	free (intl friendlies)
Feb 28-Mar 3	Euro club ties
Mar 6-10	Euro club ties
Mar 13-17	Euro club ties
Mar 20-24	Euro club ties
Mar 27-31	free (intl friendlies)
Apr 3-7	Euro club ties
Apr 10-14	free
Apr 17-21	Euro club ties
Apr 24-28	free (intl friendlies)
May 1-5	Euro club ties
May 8-12	Euro club ties
May 15-19	(May 17 - UEFA Cup Final)
May 22-26	(May 24 - Champions League Final)

*UCL = UEFA Champions League

Porto's Brazilian carries off Europe's scoring accolade for 1998-99

Jardel takes the Golden Shoe

Brazilian striker Mario Jardel won the 1998-99 Adidas Golden Shoe award after scoring 36 goals for FC Porto. He finished ahead of PSV Eindhoven striker Ruud van Nistelrooy and Real Madrid's Raul Gonzalez.

GOLDEN SHOE FINAL STANDINGS 1998-99

1	Mario Jardel (Porto)	36 gls/72 pts
2	Ruud Van Nistelrooy (PSV)	31/62
3	Raul Gonzalez (Real)	25/50
4	Luc Nilis (PSV)	24/48
	Nuno Gomes (Benfica)	24/48
	Rivaldo (Barcelona)	24/48
7	Michael Preetz (Hertha Berlin)	24/48

Top scorer...Mario Jardel

1999-00 CHAMPS LGE

1ST QUALIFYING ROUND
(July 14 and 21)
Sloga Jugomagnat (Mac) v Kapez Ganja (Aze)
IBV (Ice) v SK Tirana (Alb)
Partizan Belgrade (Yug) v Flora Tallinn (Est)
Barry Town (Wal) v Valletta (Mlt)
Litexs (Bul) v Glentoran (Nl)
FC Haka (Fin) v HB (Far)
Skonto Riga (Lat) v Jeunesse Esch (Lux)
St Patrick's Ath (Ire) v Zimbru Chisinau (Mol)
Zalgiris Vilnius (Lit) v Tsement Ararat (Arm)

2ND QUALIFYING ROUND
(July 28 and Aug 4)
Rapid Wien (Aut) v Barry Town or Valletta
Anorthosis Famagusta (Cyp) v Slovan Bratislava (Slk)
Partizan Belgrade or Flora Tallinn v Rijeka (Cro)
CSKA Moscow (Rus) v Molde (Nor)
Litexs or Glentoran v Widzew Lodz (Pol)
FC Haka or HB v Rangers (Sco)
Dinamo Tbilisi (Geo) v St Patrick's Ath or Zimbru Chisinau
Dnepr Transmash Mogilev (Bls) v AIK Stockholm (Swe)
Sloga Jugomagnat or Kapez Ganja v Brondby (Den)
Rapid Bucharest (Rom) v Skonto Riga or Jeunesse Esch
Besiktas (Tur) v Hapoel Haifa (Isr)
Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr) v Zalgiris Vilnius or Tsement Ararat
IBV or SK Tirana v MTK (Hun)
NK Maribor (Sln) v Genk (Blg)

3RD QUALIFYING ROUND
(Aug 10/11 and 24/15)
14 2nd qualifying rnd winners PLUS:
Sturm Graz (Aut), Moscow Spartak (Rus), Croatia Zagreb (Cro), Galatasaray (Tur), AaB Aalborg (Den), Servette (Swi), Boavista (Por), AEK Athens (Gre), Teplice (Cze), Parma (Ita), Hertha Berlin (Ger), Mallorca (Spa), Lyon (Fra), PSV Eindhoven (Hol), Chelsea (Eng), Fiorentina (Ita), Borussia Dortmund (Ger), Valencia (Spa)

1ST GROUP PHASE
(Sep 14/15, 21/22, 28/29, Oct 19/20, 26/27, Nov 2/3)
16 3rd qualifying rnd winners PLUS:
Milan (Ita), Bayern Munich (Ger), Barcelona (Spa), Bordeaux (Fra), Feyenoord (Hol), Manchester Utd (Eng) (holders), FC Porto (Por), Olympiakos (Gre), Sparta Prague (Cze), Rosenborg (Nor), Lazio (Ita), Bayer Leverkusen (Ger), Real Madrid (Spa), Marseille (Fra), Willem II (Hol), Arsenal (Eng)
Eight groups of four

2ND GROUP PHASE
(Nov 23/24, Dec 7/8, Feb 29, 2000/Mar 1, 7/8, 14/15, 21/22)
16 1st Group Phase winners and runners-up in four groups of four

QUARTER-FINALS
(Apr 4/5 and 18/19)

SEMI-FINALS
(May 2/3 and 9/10)

FINAL
(May 24)

1999-00 UEFA CUP

QUALIFYING ROUND (Aug 12 and 26)
KI Klaksvik (Far) v Grazer AK (Aut)
NK Gorica (Sln) v Inter Cardiff (Wal)
Lyngby (Den) v Birkirkara (Mlt)
Anderlecht (Blg) v Leiftur (Ice)
Belshina Bobruisk (Bls) v Omonia (Cyp)
Viking (Nor) v Principat (And)
Yerevan (Arm) v Hapoel Tel-Aviv (Isr)
Club Brugge (Blg) v Tulevik Viljandi (Est)
VPS Vaasa (Fin) v St Johnstone (Sco)
CSKA Sofia (Bul) v Portadown (NI)
Kryvbas Kryvyi Rig (Ukr) v Shamkir (Aze)
Steaua Bucharest (Rom) v Levadia Maardu (Est)
Grasshopper (Swi) v Bray Wanderers (Ire)
Metalurgs Liepaja (Lat) v Lech Poznan (Pol)
Lantana (Est) v Torpedo Kutaisi (Geo)
Neftchi (Aze) v Red Star Belgrade (Yug)
Bodo/Glimt (Nor) v Vaduz (Lie)
IFK Gothenburg (Swe) v Cork City (Ire)
KR Reykjavik (Ice) v Kilmarnock (Sco)
Lokomotiv Tbilisi (Geo) v Linfield (NI)
Serif Tiraspol (Mol) v Sigma Olomouc (Cze)
Vojvodina (Yug) v Ujpesti (Hun)
Vllaznia (Alb) v Spartak Trnava (Sln)
Cwmbran Town (Wal) v Celtic (Sco)
APOEL Nicosia (Cyp) v Levski Sofia (Bul)
Ferencvaros (Hun) v Constructorul Chisinau (Mol)
Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) v Sileks (Mac)
Mondercange (Lux) v Dinamo Bucharest (Rom)
Ankaragucu (Tur) v B36 (Far)
Inter Bratislava (Slk) v FC Bylis (Alb)
Riga (Lat) v Helsingborgs (Swe)
Vardar Skopje (Mac) v Legia Warsaw (Pol)
Sliema Wanderers (Mlt) v FC Zurich (Swi)
Hajduk Split (Cro) v F91 Dudelange (Lux)
Maccabi Tel-Aviv (Isr) v FBK Kaunas (Lit)
FC BATE Borisov (Bls) v Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus)
HJK Helsinki (Fin) v FC Shirak (Arm)
NK Olimpija Ljubljana (Sln) v FK Kareda (Lit)

1ST ROUND (Sept 16 and 30)
38 qualifying rnd winners PLUS:
16 teams eliminated from the Champions League, 3rd qualifying round, 3 InterToto Cup qualifiers PLUS:
Ajax (Hol), Atletico Madrid (Spa), Monaco (Fra), Roma (Ita), Benfica (Por), Nantes (Fra), Bologna (Ita), Deportivo La Coruna (Spa), Kaiserslautern (Ger), Slavia Prague (Cze), Panathinaikos (Gre), Newcastle Utd (Eng), Celta Vigo (Spa), Lens (Fra), Werder Bremen (Ger), Udinese (Ita), Roda JC (Hol), Sporting Lisbon (Por), Vitesse Arnhem (Hol), VfL Wolfsburg (Ger), Leeds Utd (Eng), Fenerbahce (Tur), PAOK Salonika (Gre), Tottenham Hotspur (Eng), Aris Saloniki (Gre), Zenit St Petersburg (Rus), Ionikos (Gre), Beira Mar (Por), Vitoria Setubal (Por), Lausanne (Swi), Lierse (Blg), Linz ASK (Aut), AB (Den), NK Osijek (Yug), Karpaty Lviv (Ukr), Stabaek IF (Nor), Amica Wronki (Pol), Debrecen (Hun), Dukla Banska Bystrica (Cze).

2ND ROUND (Oct 21 and Nov 4)

3RD ROUND (Nov 25 and Dec 9)
24 2nd rnd qualifiers PLUS:
8 3rd-place teams from Champions League groups

4TH ROUND (March 2 and 9, 2000)

QUARTER-FINALS (March 16 and 23)

SEMI-FINALS (April 6 and 20)

FINAL (May 17)

Investment opportunities...things are looking up for Sparta Prague

Goldmines in the East

But there are plenty of pitfalls, says Simon Banks

THE NEWS that Vlatava Labe Press, a German-owned publishing company, has bought Sparta Prague will have come as a relief to supporters of the Czech Republic's most successful team.

They have been in limbo since the political break-up of Czechoslovakia, because their previous owners, Slovakian steel company VSZ, lacked the resources to fund the club.

As VSZ lost money from its core business it could no longer afford to subsidise Sparta, and the club sank into debt. Now a Vlatava Labe Press director has told local media: "Sparta is a burnt house which we have to rebuild together."

The new owners had to pay off the club's £10million debts, as well as paying VSZ around £11m, but this figure is small when compared with the sort of sums involving western European clubs. Herein lies the reason why western European money is finding its way into eastern European football: value.

Sparta qualified directly for the Champions League by winning their 26th domestic title, and if they win only two of their group games and draw two others they will receive £2m from UEFA, as their share of the centrally-marketed TV rights and sponsorship.

Add to this the fact that they keep all the gate money from home matches, and the price tag looks even more reasonable. Should Sparta qualify for the second stage, they could double their money. If they have a reasonable Champions League campaign, participating in both the group stages but failing to qualify for the quarter-finals, they could net around £6m.

English-based multi-club owners ENIC bought into Sparta's city rivals, Slavia, a couple of years ago, their interest no doubt sparked by the realisation that Czech football could offer cheap entry into the buoyant European football TV rights market.

Slavia are also in the Champions League, albeit as qualifiers, so ENIC can expect a healthy pay-day some time next season.

ENIC has also been interested in Hungarian club Ferencvaros, although it is facing a rival bid from multinational sports marketing giants IMG.

The whole of eastern European football is becoming much more commercialised as the old communist infrastructure that used to support the game withers and dies.

For example, Commercial Union has a £1.5m sponsorship deal with a newly-promoted Czech side, Bohemians, and will advertise its insurance services with the aid of a red London double decker bus which will follow the team around the country.

In Poland with Korean car-maker Daewoo, and in Romania with brewers Ursus, the leagues recently signed deals whereby they take the sponsors' names. Similarly, in Slovenia, mobile phone company SIMOBIL is sponsoring the nascent league. In Hungary, meanwhile, clubs are converting to limited companies, which will lead to further foreign investment.

While much of the money going into east European football is intended ultimately to buy cheap content for western European TV, the domestic markets of some eastern European countries can be lucrative, too: Poland, for instance, where the pay TV audiences for the 1998 World Cup were third highest in Europe behind England and Germany – and Poland had not even qualified.

Interestingly, the overseas rights for the Polish League were sold for £5m, around the same amount as the domestic rights.

The potential goldmine for eastern European clubs, however, is the UEFA Cup, because rights to these games are sold by the clubs. When one considers that the going rate for the rights to an English club's home games next season is around £700,000 per game, it is easy to see how a minor east European club can hit the jackpot by being drawn against a big English club.

There are, however, possible downsides to investing in eastern Europe. Many of the national federations are still run by officials appointed under communism, and there are worries about corruption. Perhaps the biggest threat to the long-term financial health of the eastern European game is UEFA itself. The new system of coefficients that UEFA uses to determine how many clubs each country may enter into the Champions League and the UEFA Cup may be difficult to comprehend, but the net effect is to make qualification for teams from eastern Europe much harder in the future than in the past.

What a shame if the game which struggled under the yolk of dictatorial state control should emerge into the sunlight of the free market only to be stamped on by the collective greed of the bloated Western clubs.

Simon Banks writes for Soccer Investor (0171-329 3500).

Libero ROUND-UP

Drugs shock...Marseille striker Christophe Dugarry

OUT OF ACTION

Dugarry faces long ban

Marseille forward **Christophe Dugarry** faces a suspension of at least six months after testing positive for the banned anabolic steroid nandrolone. The impending inquiry meant that the French international, who underwent the test following Marseille's game against Lyon at the end of April, missed his club's pre-season training camp in south-west France.

"He really isn't in the mood to play football," said a club official. "It was more sensible to let him calmly prepare his defence."

Carlos Roa, the Mallorca and Argentina goalkeeper, has stated that he is retiring from football in order to dedicate his life to religious work. The Church of the Seventh Day Adventists member said: "God asked me to do this...I will be leaving behind being on the front pages of newspapers. My life will consist of less interviews and less autographs. My decision is irreversible." Roa was named as the most effective keeper in the Spanish top flight last season and played in the Cup-winners Cup Final for his club. "He's a great loss to Mallorca but I respect his decision," said club president Guillermo Reynes. "If he ever reconsiders his decision then he will be welcome to return and play for us again."

Former Sweden striker **Martin Dahlin** has quit football because of a long-standing back injury. He had been on loan to Hamburg from Blackburn. Dahlin scored 29 goals in 60 internationals and was part of the Sweden side who finished third at the 1994 World Cup.

Another retiree is Benfica's **Michel Preud'homme**, the former Belgium goalkeeper. He has been appointed director of the club's international relations.

COACHES ON THE MOVE

Spanish swings and roundabouts

Hours after taking Valencia to victory in the Spanish Cup Final, **Claudio Ranieri** agreed to take over at Atletico Madrid. He replaces Radomir Antic who returned to the club in March.

Ranieri's old job at Valencia will be filled by **Hector Cuper**, the former Mallorca boss.

Betis Sevilla have named **Carlos Timoteo Griguol** as their new boss. Griguol, a former Argentinian international, has most recently been at Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata. He succeeds former Spain coach **Javier Clemente**.

Newly promoted Spanish side Numancia will play under ex-international **Andoni Goikoetxea** next season. He was in charge at Compostela last term.

Valladolid have appointed **Gregorio Manzano**, from Toledo. He replaces Sergio Kresic.

In Italy, Udinese have sacked **Francesco Guidolin**, despite the fact that he took the club into the UEFA Cup. He is replaced by **Luigi De Canio**, formerly with Pescara.

Urawa Red Diamonds of Japan sacked **Hiromi Hara** because of poor results. Meanwhile, German coach **Gert Engels** was bowing out at JEF United Ichihara.

Gerard Van der Lem will take charge of Holland's AZ Alkmaar, succeeding **Wim Van Hanegem**. Van der Lem has been Louis Van Gaal's assistant at Barcelona.

Yugoslavia coach **Milan Zivadinovic** has been sacked after less than a year in charge.

Red Star Belgrade parted company with coach **Vojin Lazarevic** just hours after the team won the Yugoslavian Cup. He is replaced by former Obilic coach **Miroljub Ostojic**.

Russian side Shinnik have appointed former Lithuania national coach **Benyaminas Zelkyavichus**. He was formerly assistant at Rotor Volgograd and succeeds interim coach **Alexander Pobegalov**.

Meanwhile, former Russian Olympic coach **Yevgeny Kucherevsky** quit Uralan after just a week in the job stating that he needed a break from management.

IFK Gothenburg coach **Reine Almqvist** resigned after a poor run of form left the club second from bottom in the Swedish League. His successor is assistant **Stefan Lundin**.

Frenchman **Didier Notheaux** has been fired as coach of Burkina Faso, despite leading the country to the finals of next years African Nations Cup.

Italian coach **Gianni Carnevale** has been appointed coach of Georgian side Dinamo Batumi.

In South Africa, **Ted Dumitru** quit Mamelodi Sundowns claiming that the club's directors were interfering in his work, while **Paul Dolezar** parted company with Kaizer Chiefs after failing to agree a new contract.

PLAYERS STAYING ON

- **Alessandro Del Piero** has committed himself to Juventus until June 2005.
- Racing Santander's **Pedro Munitis** has agreed a new four-year contract.
- Midfielder **Neil Lennon** has signed up for another four years at Leicester City.
- West Ham defender **Rio Ferdinand** has agreed a new six-year contract at the club, ending speculation that he was bound for Roma.

CONFEDERATIONS CUP DRAW

GROUP A		Venue
July 25	Bolivia v Egypt	Mexico City
July 25	Mexico v Saudi Arabia	Mexico City
July 27	Saudi Arabia v Bolivia	Mexico City
July 27	Mexico v Egypt	Mexico City
July 29	Egypt v Saudi Arabia	Mexico City
July 29	Bolivia v Mexico	Mexico City

GROUP B		
July 24	Brazil v Germany	Guadalajara
July 24	New Zealand v USA	Guadalajara
July 28	Germany v New Zealand	Guadalajara
July 28	Brazil v USA	Guadalajara
July 30	USA v Germany	Guadalajara
July 30	New Zealand v Brazil	Guadalajara

SEMI-FINALS		
Aug 1	1st A v 2nd B	Mexico City
Aug 1	1st B v 2nd A	Guadalajara

3RD PLACE PLAY-OFF	
Aug 3	in Guadalajara

FINAL	
Aug 4	in Mexico City

INTERNATIONAL INS AND OUTS

Copa croppers

Edilson was dropped from **Brazil**'s Copa America squad because his cheeky ball-juggling for his club side Corinthians caused an on-pitch battle. The incident came during the Paulista championship Final against Palmeiras and led to the match being abandoned *(see page 51)*. Speaking about his decision to drop Edilson from his squad, Brazil coach Wanderley Luxemburgo said: "I didn't like his attitude."

The squad was further depleted when **Leonardo** walked out, claiming that he had lost the motivation to play for Brazil.

Argentina also suffered a loss when **Fernando Redondo** reached an agreement with national coach Marcelo Bielsa that he could miss out on the Copa America. "I need a holiday to recover my physical and mental condition," said the Real Madrid midfielder.

Rene Higuita, the **Colombia** goalkeeper dropped from a recent national squad for demanding extra payments, was recalled for the Copa America. He last played for Colombia in 1997.

Masayuki Okano, **Masahiro Ando**, **Hideto Suzuki** and **Takashi Fukunishi** were all late call-ups for **Japan**'s Copa America squad. The four withdrawn were **Eisuke Nakanishi**, **Tatsuhiko Kubo** (both injured), **Shinji Ono** and **Atsushi Yanagisawa**.

Greece-based midfielder **Kennedy Nagoli** was recalled to the **Zimbabwe** squad for

the Cosafa Castle Cup quarter-final against Swaziland. The Aris Salonika player replaced captain Norman Mapeza, who withdrew in order to sort out a new club contract in Turkey.

FOOTBALL BUSINESS

● The **Asian confederation** has continued to threaten to boycott the qualifying stages of the 2002 World Cup despite UEFA's offer to give up one of its automatic places at the tournament.

UEFA were originally allocated 15 automatic places, but in the light of protests from the AFC that their allocation of four berths was not enough, the European body suggested that representatives from the two confederations should play-off for the final slot (*see Commentary, page 4*).

Meanwhile, **FIFA** stated that it had postponed the vote on the venue for the **2006 World Cup**. The five candidates – England, Germany, South Africa, Morocco and Brazil – were expecting a decision in March next year, but must now wait until July. FIFA said that it took the decision to allow each bid to be studied by the continental congresses of the countries concerned.

Ajax have taken a 51 per cent stake in Ghana's Goldfields club.

Manchester United have named FC Fortune of South Africa to be their 'player development representatives' in southern Africa. In effect, Fortune will scout for talent in the region, with United offering advice and technical assistance in return.

The **Polish federation** president **Marian Dziurowicz** has been voted out of office, bringing to an end the long-running dispute, which included accusations of corruption and cronyism, between the organisation and the Sports Ministry. His replacement is **Michal Listkiewicz.**

UEFA has told the **Bosnia** football authorities that only teams from a unified League, due to begin in August, would be allowed to compete in European competition in the 2000-01 season. Until now, the country has had three leagues in operation, divided largely along ethnic lines. However, there were doubts about whether the new League could be formed in time for next season. As it is, no Bosnian sides will take part in the European cups (except the InterToto) in 1999-00 because of disagreements over the venues for the championship play-offs that would have determined the qualifiers.

Geoff Thompson, the acting chairman of the **English FA** since Keith Wiseman's resignation six months ago, has been elected to the post on a permanent basis.

Copa walkout...Leonardo

Vote for your Top 10!

...and take the chance to decide the century's best players

HAVE you nominated your Top 10 players of the century yet? Time is not exactly short, but it's running out, and we want you to send us your list of the world's greatest footballers, past or present.

Your top 10 selections will be used to compile a Readers' Top 100 players of the century, which will be published in our final issue of the millennium, on sale in December.

To cast your vote, enter the players' names in order of preference on the coupon. Whoever you think was the greatest player of the century, enter his name, in capitals please, in the space for No 1. Then do the same with the rest of your top 10 choices. When we receive your completed coupon, we will award 10 points to each No 1 selection, nine points to No 2 and so on, and from this calculate the century's top players.

Please help us to make this into the most comprehensive soccer survey ever by completing and returning the coupon to us by the end of October. Enjoy your decision-making!

My Top 10 in CAPITAL letters, please

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____
6 _____
7 _____
8 _____
9 _____
10 _____

My name _____
My address _____
_____
_____
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Country _____

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London SE1 9LS.

AUG

Gold again...Roberto Carlos leads Brazil's celebrations

Easy does it

Nicholas Harling sees a Rivaldo-inspired Brazil cruise to victory

FINAL

BRAZIL 3 URUGUAY 0

THE EXPECTED avalanche did not quite materialise but Brazil still managed to retain the Copa America with consummate ease, helped by a vintage performance from Rivaldo, who scored the first two goals and made the third for Ronaldo.

Brazil's sixth title should have been embellished by Rivaldo making even more of a name for himself, but he did not quite manage to become the first man in Copa Final history to hit a hat-trick.

Uruguay had arrived in Paraguay with a scratch squad under a coach, Victor Pua, who will now give way to Daniel Passarella. They surpassed themselves by reaching the Final, and their best hope was to resist Brazil for 90 minutes and go for another penalty shoot-out. Forced to chase the game, however, when Rivaldo scored twice in six minutes midway through the first half, Uruguay were thereafter always waging a losing battle. The suspension of the outstanding Pablo Garcia in midfield proved an enormous handicap.

In the absence of Garcia, Pua's line-up was a betrayal of his negative intentions. The coach sacrificed striker Gabriel Alvez and reinforced his midfield with Liber Vespa and Christian Callejas, neither of whom came close to matching Garcia for enterprise. Marcelo Zalayeta was left to forage alone up front although captain Federico Magallanes did occupy an advanced midfield role. When Ze Roberto was dumped on his backside within seconds of the start, Uruguay's policy was obvious. If they were going to set an outright record by capturing their 15th Copa title, it would not be pretty.

Uruguay's tight-marking led to a fraught first few minutes riddled with free-kicks for both sides until Brazil started to create chances. Rivaldo shot over, Ronaldo was bundled over and Ze Roberto forced just too wide. When Brazil took a 20th minute lead, the goal that was lifted over Fabian Carini by Rivaldo's deft header inevitably followed a free-kick. Taken by Flavio Conceicao, it came after the first of five bookings. Callejas was the culprit for tripping Ze Roberto.

For the second goal, Rivaldo displayed his expertise on the ground. He skipped on to a pass from Roberto Carlos, sidestepped Daniel Alejandro 's challenge and chipped the helpless Carini. Brazil were now in supreme and familiar control, combining a lightness of touch with unpredictable bursts of acceleration.

The only threat to Dida had been an awkward angled drive from Callejas when, in the 44th minute, Uruguay reminded Brazil they were still a long way from absolute resignation. Lembo's shrewd pass sent Martin Del Campo in to rattle the bar. Andres Fleurquin volleyed the rebound over.

Yet a minute after the interval the match was as good as over. Rivaldo dinked a pass into the path of Ronaldo, racing past his markers down the inside left channel. Carini was beaten all ends up by a glorious rising shot. That was Ronaldo at his best, coming a year and a week after his distressing performance in Paris in the World Cup Final.

Ronaldo tumbled over Carini in pursuit of another goal and was denied by the goalkeeper at full stretch, but the worst miss was Rivaldo's. He shot tamely wide when picked out by Amoroso, who enjoyed an excellent second half. So, too, did Magallanes for Uruguay, but Dida denied both the vanquished captain and Zalayeta before Alvez appeared as a substitute to squander Uruguay's most inviting opportunity of a consolation goal.

Winning ways...striker Amoroso

FINAL LINE-UPS

July 18, 1999 - Asuncion

BRAZIL 3 (Rivaldo 20, 27, Ronaldo 46)
URUGUAY 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)

BRAZIL: Dida – Cafu, Antonio Carlos, Joao Carlos, Roberto Carlos, Emerson Ferreira, Flavio Conceicao, Rivaldo, Ze Roberto, Ronaldo, Amoroso

URUGUAY: Fabian Carini – Martin Del Campo, Fernando Picun, Alejandro Lembo, Federico Bergara (Gianni Guigou 74), Andres Fleurquin, Walter Coelho (Gabriel Alvez 56), Liber Vespa (Antonio Pacheco 46), Federico Magallanes, Christian Callejas, Marcelo Zalayeta

Old masters still excite

Nicholas Harling on the players of the tournament

THE exchange of shirts between Luis Hernandez and Ivan Zamorano at the end of the third-place match was testimony to the bond that exists among the world's finest footballers. Great players both of them, there was a mutual respect as they shook hands after Mexico's 2-1 victory.

Two men the wrong side of 30, Hernandez and Zamorano exposed the myth which insists that players of that age should be escorted gently towards retirement. If Hernandez is indeed in the swansong of his career, the energy and skill with which he created Mexico's goals would still be the envy of many a younger striker.

Zamorano has told Chile that they should nurture new blood – maybe the 23-year-old Claudio Nunez – but Zamorano nevertheless led Chile's attack with his usual verve. However, while his star was undoubtedly in the ascendance, that of his team-mate Marcelo Salas was in rapid decline.

Salas, who was dismissed in Chile's second game, against Venezuela, missed a crucial penalty in the semi-final against Uruguay and later in the same game suffered an injury that forced him to sit out the third-place tie. But for all that, the Copa was more about the players who came through rather than those who disappointed.

No player suffered more than Miguel Benitez, whose missed penalty in the quarter-final shoot-out against Uruguay cost Paraguay the chance of progress. Yet Benitez had achieved so much before that fateful moment to inspire the hosts. Who, for instance, could forget his goals against Japan and Uruguay, created after a simple dip of his shoulders left his markers stranded in his wake?

The man to blame for Benitez's agony was Fabian Carini, who touched the spot kick on to the post. Yet the 19-year-old Carini was to improve on that save in the blur of action when he sprang to his left to inflict further stress on Mauricio Aros of Chile during the next spot-kick decider. Chile had advanced at the expense of Colombia who revealed a midfielder of true potential in Jorge Bolano.

When it came to defending, few players set better examples than Alejandro Lembo and Carlos Gamarra. Lembo's long legs won many a tackle for Uruguay, while Gamarra's composure at the back and forays forward were highlights of Paraguay's play. Gamarra is no slouch but even he could have been left standing by Roberto Carlos, Brazil's springer of a left-back. The dashes of Ze Roberto down the same flank illuminated Brazil's semi-final against Mexico. And then, in the Final, came yet more left-footed wizardry from Rivaldo, who was watched by Bobby Charlton, England World Cup ambassador, he of the finest left foot of them all.

Star performer...Paraguay's Miguel Benitez (left)

ALL-STAR COPA TEAM

HOW THEY LINE UP

CARINI (Uruguay) – GAMARRA (Paraguay), LEMBO (Uruguay), ROBERTO CARLOS (Brazil) – BOLANO (Colombia), RIVALDO (Brazil), SIERRA (Chile), RIQUELME (Argentina), ZE ROBERTO (Brazil) – ZAMORANO (Chile), BENITEZ (Paraguay).
Substitutes: RONALDO (Brazil), PALACIOS (Peru), MARQUEZ (Mexico), ANTONIO CARLOS (Brazil), HERNANDEZ (Mexico).

Results

FIRST ROUND

GROUP A

June 29	Paraguay 0 Bolivia 0
June 29	Peru 3 Japan 2
July 2	Paraguay 4 Japan 0
July 2	Peru 1 Bolivia 0
July 5	Bolivia 1 Japan 1
July 5	Paraguay 1 Peru 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paraguay	3	2	1	0	5	0	7
Peru	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Bolivia	3	0	2	1	1	2	2
Japan	3	0	1	2	3	8	1

GROUP B

June 30	Mexico 1 Chile 0
June 30	Brazil 7 Venezuela 0
July 3	Chile 3 Venezuela 0
July 3	Brazil 2 Mexico 1
July 6	Venezuela 1 Mexico 3
July 6	Brazil 1 Chile 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil	3	3	0	0	10	1	9
Mexico	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
Chile	3	1	0	2	3	2	3
Venezuela	3	0	0	3	1	13	0

GROUP C

July 1	Colombia 1 Uruguay 0
July 1	Argentina 3 Ecuador 1
July 4	Argentina 0 Colombia 3
July 4	Ecuador 1 Uruguay 2
July 7	Ecuador 1 Colombia 2
July 7	Uruguay 0 Argentina 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colombia	3	3	0	0	6	1	9
Argentina	3	2	0	1	5	4	6
Uruguay	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Ecuador	3	0	0	3	3	7	0

QUARTER-FINALS

July 10	Peru 3 Mexico 3
	Mexico 4-2 on pens
July 10	Paraguay 1 Uruguay 1
	Uruguay 5-3 on pens
July 11	Colombia 2 Chile 3
July 11	Brazil 2 Argentina 1

SEMI-FINALS

July 13	Chile 1 Uruguay 1
	Uruguay 5-3 on pens
July 14	Brazil 2 Mexico 0

THIRD-PLACE PLAY-OFF

July 17	Mexico 2 Chile 1

FINAL

July 18	Brazil 3 Uruguay 0

Full line-ups in World Service, page 58

Copa clash...Japan's Ito chases Bolivian forward Moreno in the 1-1 draw

Paraguay leave it late

GROUP A

PARAGUAY did not have it all their own way as favourites in Group A. Far from it. Only in the last minute of their final group game, against Peru, did Roque Santa Cruz saunter through the defence on to Roberto Acuna's splendid through pass to beat the advancing Oscar Ibanez and make the hosts a present of a 1-0 win and top place.

A feature of Paraguay's play in a lively opening encounter of cut and thrust against Bolivia was the excursions from the back by their excellent captain, Carlos Gamarra, who twice narrowly failed to score with headers. Bolivia, Copa runners-up two years ago when, as hosts, they had the altitude of La Paz to aid their cause, were largely on the defensive but squandered a glaring opportunity when Jaime Moreno, just on as substitute, managed to trip himself up when right through on goal and beyond the advancing Ricardo Tavarelli.

In midfield Erwin Sanchez was as busy and prominent as ever for Bolivia, who held out for a 0-0 draw.

That game completed the opening day double-header. The Copa's curious schedule had required not Paraguay but Japan and Peru to open proceedings in Defensores del Chaco Stadium before the opening ceremony. Japan, entering the event for the first and probably last time, achieved the doubly dubious distinction of scoring the first goal and becoming the first nation – along with Bolivia – to go out.

Wagner Lopes, Japan's naturalised Brazilian, put them ahead with a deft header after only seven minutes. The team then resisted all Peru's pressure until the 70th minute, when Jorge Soto's acute-angle shot was the first of four goals in 11 minutes. Substitute Roberto Holsen promptly headed Peru in front before another substitute, Atsumiro Miura, equalised with a deflected free-kick. Four minutes later Holsen drove in the goal that gave Peru a 3-2 win.

Peru's next game, against Bolivia, was a drab affair until substitute Israel Zuniga's appearance. He accepted a pass from little Roberto Palacios in the 87th minute and banged the only goal past Jose Fernandez. Zuniga then missed a sitter before being sent off.

Japan's resistance evaporated completely in their second game, against Paraguay, when a glorious 35-yarder from the recalled Miguel Benitez eroded their dwindling confidence. The final 4-0 scoreline did not flatter the hosts.

Admirably, Paraguay had moved the last group games to the provinces, but the people of Pedro Juan Caballero, some 335 miles from the capital, Asuncion, did not turn out on what was an admittedly wretched night. Results elsewhere meant that Bolivia and Japan kicked off knowing that if they drew, they would both be eliminated.

Oscar Sanchez was dismissed right on half-time, but Bolivia went in front after 52 minutes through Erwin Sanchez's free-kick. Twenty minutes later Lopes equalised with a penalty, but in a furious finish both sides failed to improve on a 1-1 scoreline. Masami Ihara's 82nd-minute expulsion for two yellow cards was a sad sight. The 32-year-old was playing perhaps the last game of an international career that spanned 123 games.

Nicholas Harling

Brazil by far the strongest

GROUP B

THE WILD celebrations with which Venezuela saluted Gabriel Urdaneta's goal against Mexico, their only one of the Copa, told its own sorry tale. Mexico were already three goals to the good in their final group game and Venezuela's elimination was all but confirmed. Crushed 7-0 by Brazil in their opening game and 3-0 by Chile next time out, Venezuela thus maintained their sad Copa record.

Without a goal in Bolivia in the 1997 event or a single point since their 2-2 draw with Uruguay in 1993 in the tournament staged by Ecuador, Venezuela once again failed to shine. Maybe there will be an improvement by the time they act as hosts in 2005. Maybe not.

Whatever the future holds, Venezuela could have done with easier opening opponents than Brazil, even a Brazil who were slow to get into their stride and anything but impressive during the early stages. By the end of the evening, however, it become palpably clear that Brazil were overwhelmingly the strongest team in the group and Venezuela indisputably the weakest. Ronaldo and Amoroso helped themselves to two goals each and Emerson, Rivaldo and Ronaldinho all added another.

All too frequently the remnants of Venezuela coach Jose Omar Pastoriza's defence was left horribly exposed in one-on-one situations.

Mexico had been good value for their 1-0 victory over Chile in the group's first game, the goal coming when Cuauhtemoc Blanco put Luis Hernandez through on the hour.

Chile looked such a poor proposition that it was lucky for them that they could line up next time against Venezuela. Never was there a better opportunity to rebuild lost confidence. Only 11 minutes had elapsed when, from a left-wing cross by Marcelo Salas, Ivan Zamorano half-volleyed Chile into the lead. No sooner had Rolando Alvarez hooked Zamorano's next effort off the line than the Venezuelan

Head start...Mexico were comfortable winners over Venezuela

defender was getting himself sent off for a nasty two-footed challenge on Salas.

Venezuela's plight increased when the excellent Chilean playmaker Jose Luis Sierra celebrated his return to the side with a blistering left footer into the top corner. His side's goalkeeper, Marcelo Ramirez, whose attire resembled something out of a bad production of *Hamlet*, denied Venezuela with a stupendous reflex save from Ruberth Moran's header, after which the one-way traffic resumed at the other end.

Zamorano had struck an upright before Chile, too, were reduced to 10 men, Jorge Vargas receiving his second yellow card in three minutes. It made little difference to their progress, with Edson Tortolero turning a Salas cross into his own net after 66 minutes. However, satisfaction for Salas did not last long. Already cautioned, his next act was a pathetic attempt to deceive the referee that he had been fouled. Off he went, leaving Chile with nine men to see out the last 19 minutes against Venezuela's 10.

By then, the awful conditions in Ciudad del Este, where the rain had lashed down all day, had reduced the crowd to only the most hardy. The day's entertainment had begun in front of a 25,000 full house, most of them clad in cheap mackintoshes purchased outside the stadium from street traders who must have made a killing.

The sodden surface did not prevent Brazil and Mexico from contributing to a fine spectacle earlier in the day, epitomised by the quality of the goal with which Brazil took a 19th-minute lead. The passes fairly flew between Rivaldo, Ronaldo and Amoroso before Jorge Campos was beaten by a shot low to his left.

Worse was to come for Mexico when Alex accepted Emerson's square pass to drive a fulminating shot in off the underside of the bar. Gallantly, Manuel Lapuente's selection forced their way deservedly back into the game. Pavel Pardo's free-kick caused confusion in the Brazilian defence, and substitute Isaac Terrazas stabbed in the loose ball. Brazil held out for a 2-1 success after Rivaldo had suffered a harsh dismissal for a lunging tackle on Salvador Carmona.

Results elsewhere meant that the third day's programme was largely academic. Mexico's 3-1 win over Venezuela came with the help of two goals from Blanco and another by Daniel Osorno. Blanco then blotted his copybook by getting himself sent off for a stray elbow.

Venezuela's defeat left Chile certain to advance no matter what their result against Brazil, who took a 36th minute lead with a Ronaldo penalty and survived one 36 minutes later when Pedro Gonzalez was denied by Dida's fine save. By then fog was rapidly obscuring proceedings. It left the Argentinian referee Horacio Elizondo with no alternative but to bring the teams off in the 84th minute. According to Copa regulations, since three-quarters of the match had taken place, Brazil's 1-0 lead stood as the final scoreline.

Nicholas Harling

Midfield power gives Colombia the edge

GROUP C

Spot of bother...Argentina's Palermo missed three penalties against Colombia

COLOMBIA won all their matches in a group containing Argentina and Uruguay, but this was no great surprise.

Both nations sent virtual B teams to the tournament – Argentina because European players needed a rest (although there is controversy about whether most of the absentees asked for a rest or were simply not picked) and Uruguay because coach Daniel Passarella decided to stay at home and start training, with 18 of the best Europe-based players, for the World Cup qualifiers. He let assistant coach Victor Pua take whatever was left to Paraguay.

Colombia did not have such problems except for the withdrawal of goalkeeper Oscar Cordoba (due to a long injury lay-off) and striker Faustino Asprilla (injured at the last moment), and the team played the best soccer.

Their impressive midfield of Jorge Bolano, Harold Lozano, Arley Betancourt and Freddy Grisales made it easy to forget Carlos Valderrama, the team's midfield general for so many years.

Against Uruguay, Colombia missed chances and could have won by much more than 1-0. In the 3-0 defeat of Argentina, the losers had a fair share of the game, but their attack never functioned, partly due to the aforementioned Colombian midfield.

Then, of course, there was that incredible sequence of three penalty misses (an Argentina national record) by the same player, Martin Palermo.

People questioned the wisdom of allowing Palermo to take a third penalty after missing two, but coach Marcelo Bielsa had been sent off by then and his orders (via mobile phone) for Roberto Ayala to take the kick apparently did not get through.

The three penalties could perhaps have given Argentina a draw they would not have deserved, but it is significant that they never got near to scoring from open play.

For their last match, against Ecuador, when already qualified, Colombia fielded eight reserves – including goalkeeper Rene Higuita, back after a long absence – and were still good enough to win 2-1.

Argentina's best players were defenders Ayala and Walter Samuel, and midfielder Juan Riquelme – the last two probably would have been the only ones with regular places if the best Europe-based players had been included. The side's problems lay in attack, though Palermo scored three of their five goals and could have gone to the top of the scorers list if he had converted those penalties against Colombia.

When Argentina and Uruguay met in the final group match they had already qualified for the quarter-finals and the dubious prize for the winner was a clash with favourites and champions Brazil.

Cristian Gonzalez, playing his best game, put Argentina ahead within two minutes, but then Uruguay began to control the play and went close to equalising. Palermo's 57th-minute goal settled things for Argentina, but he paid heavily for it – an elbow in his right eye as he shot caused him to leave the field with the eye completely closed.

One of Uruguay's few experienced players, Marcelo Zalayeta, who plays for Juventus, stood out, driving his country to their only victory (2-1 against Ecuador) with two goals in three minutes.

More goals were expected from Ecuador's forwards than three in three games, but Ariel Graziani and Ivan Kaviedes lacked support and understanding.

Eric Weil

COPA SIDELINES

- **THE RE-SALE of the (comparatively) cheap tickets was a big industry at the Copa America. For the inaugural Group B games in Ciudad del Este, just over the border from Brazil and where Brazil played, standing tickets officially costing just over £4 were being offered for £20, while seats at £6.30 were on offer at £47. This happened at other venues, too, but apparently sales did not always go too well. Tickets for many matches were officially sold out, but there was empty space at others.**
- **The organising committee in Pedro Juan Caballero, one of the match venues, handed out free condoms to all visitors at the airport, bus stations, hotels, shopping centres and the stadium.**
- **2,700 media representatives were accredited for the tournament. The largest visiting contingent was 120, from Japan.**
- **Brazil and Venezuela have met 13 times since their first match in 1968 and Brazil have won every time. Their 7-0 victory here is the record win in the tournament, and their highest.**
- **A Buenos Aires household goods firm boosted sales before last year's World Cup by offering to waive customers' instalment payments on products if Argentina won the trophy. They were at it again during the Copa. Customers who bought goods valued at more than £100 in 18 instalments during the three days before each of Argentina's matches were released from paying an instalment for every goal Argentina scored. But penalties did not count, so the joke in Buenos Aires was that Martin Palermo had bought a washing machine from the shop before the offer opened and missed three penalties against Colombia because instalments could not be reduced!**
- **The most popular line-up at the Copa was 4-3-1-2, used by 10 of the countries. The exceptions were Japan (4-4-2) and Uruguay (4-1-2-1-2).**
- **Ticket prices for the quarter-finals were increased by 60 per cent on the published price. The organisers said the move had been necessary because the local currency, the guarani, had recently suffered a strong devaluation.**

Eric Weil

Same old story...Paraguay's Cabellero (left) loses out

So sad for hero Benitez

PARAGUAY 1 URUGUAY 1 (URUGUAY 5-3 ON PENS)

POOR Miguel Benitez joined the list of footballers who have made the wrong kind of names for themselves after he missed a crucial penalty.

With the hopes of the host nation resting on him, Benitez failed to repeat his accuracy of more than an hour earlier, when he had scored a splendid goal.

A helicopter hovering overhead did Benitez no favours as he walked slowly from the centre circle to take the eighth penalty of the match. He shot weakly, goalkeeper Fabian Carini guessed right, dived left, and pushed the ball to safety.

Federico Magallanes scored Uruguay's final penalty, and the hosts were out, leaving a 43,000 full house at Defensores del Chaco stadium in stunned silence.

Paraguay had been in command before and after their 16th-minute goal, when Benitez turned his marker brilliantly and shot beyond Carini.

Instead of cheering for Paraguay, most of the crowd indulged in chants for the rival clubs, Olimpia and Cerro Porteno, and what little encouragement there was for the home team ebbed away after 65 minutes, when Uruguay equalised.

Coelho cut in from the right, the ball ran loose from Arce's tackle, but only as far as Zalayeta, whose shot was crisp and precise. Zalayeta later hit the keeper's legs with a shot that could well have averted the shoot-out had it gone in. Benitez, for one, would have been grateful.

Nicholas Harling

Javier's move goes wrong

CHILE 3 COLOMBIA 2

COLOMBIAN coach Javier Alvarez was responsible for perhaps the worst decision of the entire Copa when he chose to jettison Jorge Bolano midway through the quarter-final at Luque.

Bolano had scored Colombia's first goal and influenced proceedings with his running and passing. Then he failed to reappear for the second half.

We naturally assumed he had been injured. Wrong – Alvarez had wanted to see how Juan Ramirez would fare in his place. This disastrous error probably cost Colombia a chance of further progress.

Their lead, only 2-1 at half-time, disappeared four minutes after the restart, and Chile went on to win.

Only seven minutes had passed when Bolano sped on to a pass from Grisales and beat Ramirez with a rising shot.

Chile had their chances early on. Acuna shot tamely at Calero when unmarked, and Zamorano returned a punched clearance from the keeper with an overhead kick that was cleared by the excellent Cortes.

In the 25th minute Chile equalised, Reyes heading in a corner from Sierra, but Colombia were in front again nine minutes later when Ricard's pass – his most useful contribution of the day – left Bonilla free to tuck the ball inside a post.

Gonzales, deputising for the suspended Salas, twice forced Calero into diving saves before Chile got on terms with another Sierra-Reyes combination, this time a free-kick and a header at the far post.

Amid a sudden flurry of bookings, Reyes displayed his versatility at the other end, a well-timed tackle forcing Bonilla to shoot wide. There was no way Colombia could relax, as the increasingly-dangerous Zamorano proved when he shook off his pursuers and hammered Chile in front for the first – and last – time.

Colombia had been determined to show they could capture the Copa even without Asprilla, but despite playing some of the best football in the tournament, their effort ended in failure.

Nicholas Harling

Two fail drugs tests

MEXICO 3 PERU 3 (MEXICO 4-2 ON PENS)

SO MUCH for the pessimists who thought that Mexico would suffer from the absence of three suspended players. Striker Blanco was out after being sent off against Venezuela, and midfielders Lara and Chavez were banned after failing drugs tests.

Urine samples taken after the group game against Brazil showed Lara had traces of testosterone and Chavez had traces of nandrolone.

On top of that, Mexico went two down in 15 minutes, Palacios scoring the first after bemusing several defenders in a solo run, Pereda getting the second after Palacios had freed him with the best pass of the tournament.

But Mexico fought back, and halved the deficit when Garcia Aspe escaped down the left and crossed for Hernandez to head in. Three minutes later Jayo brought down Zapeda, and Hernandez stroked home the penalty.

That was four goals in 32 minutes, and another arrived after 41 when Solano curled in a left-footer to put Peru ahead again.

The second half did not live up to the standard of the first, and for a long time Peru held on to their advantage. They scored again, but Maestri was offside.

In the last minutes Mexico launched a furious onslaught, and even a full-length dive from Ibanez did not take him far enough to reach the fierce long shot from Torrado that put Mexico level with three minutes left.

So to the shoot-out, in which the first five kickers succeeded, but Mexico prevailed after Soto shot over and Reynoso shot wide.

Nicholas Harling

Faded away...Argentina's Juan Riquelme

Dida's save does the trick

BRAZIL 2 ARGENTINA 1

THE latest edition of the classic South American contest finished with the expected result. Brazil had picked their best players, and won; Argentina had not, and lost.

For a brief period the run of surprise results appeared likely to continue, after Sorin's shot had been deflected past Dida. That was in the 11th minute, but from then on Brazil's defence was not troubled.

The teams obviously had great respect for each other, reflected in the number of 'Hollywoods' used in attempts to gain free-kicks or penalties. Ortega, back from suspension, and Riquelme did well in the first half, then disappeared as Rivaldo took over. He equalised with a free-kick that cleared the wall at such a speed that keeper Burgos never moved.

Three minutes after half-time, Ronaldo scored a goal that put Brazil in front and sapped Argentina's confidence.

From then on they rarely figured as an attacking force, offering little support to poor Palermo. Yet Brazil could not draw further away, and in the end they had to thank Dida for stopping a penalty from Ayala in the 78th minute.

If that had gone in, a shoot-out would have been highly likely. But even then few would have backed Argentina.

Eric Weil

Brazil coast it

BRAZIL 2 MEXICO 0

BRAZIL eased into their third successive Copa Final with so much to spare that poor Mexico were almost embarrassed. Mexico had run Wanderley Luxemburgo's team reasonably close in their group fixture but when it came to the semi-final reunion, Brazil did virtually as they pleased, comfortably maintaining the tournament's last remaining 100 per cent record. The shame was that not more people were there to see them. Escalating ticket prices, which reached the £40 mark, kept the crowd down to around 10,000. Thousands more stood outside as the game began, unable to afford to enter.

The return from suspension of Cuauhtemoc Blanco did Mexico few favours. Although Blanco forced Dida into his one worthwhile save shortly before Brazil took a 25th minute lead, the Mexican striker dallied far too long when the indefatigable Luis Hernandez picked him out unmarked at the far post with five minutes left. Cafu raced across to dispossess Blanco. By then Brazil were coasting, conserving their energy for the task to come.

Brazil had gone into the tie on the back of a furore caused by their audacious demand that the Final, if they reached it, should be switched to Ciudad del Este's stadium, just across the border from their homeland. If not, insisted Brazil, they would refuse to fulfil the Final. Quite rightly CONMEBOL called Brazil's bluff, refusing to give in to the ultimatum.

Brazil quickly demonstrated that they need fear neither opponents nor venue. No sooner had Jorge Campos dived to his left to keep out an Emerson drive than Salvador Carmona was clearing off the line for Mexico. The main threat to Mexico's ragged defence was coming from Ze Roberto down the left.

When the first Brazilian goal came, Ze Roberto, sure enough, was the provider. Rivaldo's header hit the post but the rebound fell perfectly for Amoroso to sweep in. Amoroso returned another Ze Roberto cross only for Isaac Terrazas to block Ronaldo's shot. When Claudio Suarez ended Ronaldo's next surge in the 42nd minute, Rivaldo picked up the slack, driving Brazil's second goal past Campos.

Manuel Lapuente, the Mexico coach, had surprisingly omitted Ramon Ramirez and Alberto Garcia Aspe but when the second half began with Ramirez bustling away in midfield, Mexico duly improved, despite wasting free-kicks galore from just outside the area.

Brazil should have scored again when Ronaldo ran clear on to Amoroso's pass but unaccountably he overran the ball. Ronaldo had every right to be dazzled by Campos diving at his feet, clad in a fluorescent green jersey, the latest garment from the Mexican goalkeeper's expanding wardrobe. Whatever the great man's excuse, he had done more than enough, surely, to deserve cheers instead of jeers when he was then substituted.

Nicholas Harling

Uruguay squeeze through

URUGUAY 1 CHILE 1 (URUGUAY 5-3 ON PENS)

IF URUGUAY'S opponents had not already received the chilling message, it became crystal clear after their semi-final. "Beat us over 90 minutes or forget it" was the warning that Victor Pua's squad endorsed in the process of reaching their second Final in three Copas.

Uruguay advanced again by precisely the same score that had accounted for Paraguay in the previous round. The nation that won the 1995 Copa in a penalty shoot-out triumph over Brazil maintained their 100 per cent record from the spot but their victory was scarcely deserved.

Over 90 minutes Chile had looked the better side. Then two minutes of unbelievable bad luck, coupled with the disastrous penalty miss by Mauricio Aros, deprived Nelson Acosta's squad of a place in the Final for the first time since 1987.

For the Uruguay-born Acosta it was a night of anguish. His overzealous coaching led him to be banished from the touchline by Paraguayan referee Ubaldo Aquino. He duly reappeared immediately above the dug-out but from a seat where his influence waned and he was less equipped to prevent Uruguay from settling for another shoot-out in a semi-final curious for the fact that it brought together two nations placed third in their groups.

With Estay and Sierra prominent in midfield, Chile had made the early running. Carini's diving save denied Acuna and then the Uruguayan goalkeeper safely held a long drive from Sierra.

The game enthralled the small crowd even though Uruguay had only seriously threatened when Bergara's 30 yarder almost surprised Ramirez. After 22 minutes, however, Lembo headed them in front via an upright. Coelho had supplied the corner, Uruguay's first of the game.

A double let-off for Uruguay followed two minutes later. No sooner had Sierra swerved a vicious free-kick on to the bar than Salas was doing likewise with a penalty. But the luck evened itself out to some extent after 48 minutes when the handily placed Zalayeta swung and completely missed an inviting cross from Coelho. It was typical of Zalayeta's contribution for Uruguay.

When he should have been buoyant after becoming the first man to score against Paraguay in open play in the quarter-final, Zalayeta continued on his indifferent way. But for the fact that he is something of a specialist from the spot, Pua surely would have taken him off.

Not so Lembo at the back. His was a true captain's display. Twice when Salas was well placed to finish off promising moves, Lembo was there with the interceptions, but he was among those missing when Sierra floated in a 62nd-minute free-kick and Zamorano headed a glorious equaliser into the top corner.

He was denied another goal by Carini rushing out to kick clear, and so it went to penalties and Carini's breathtaking save from Aros. Sadly for Uruguay, their jubilation was tempered by the earlier booking of Garcia that would keep him out of the Final.

Nicholas Harling

Beaten...Zamorano's goal was not enough for Chile

Copa America 99 Squads

ARGENTINA

COACH: Marcelo Bielsa

GOALKEEPERS
1 German BURGOS 16.4.69
12 Albano BIZZARRI 9.11.77

DEFENDERS
2 Roberto AYALA 14.4.73
3 Juan Pablo SORIN 5.5.76
4 Hugo IBARRA 1.4.74
6 Walter SAMUEL 23.3.78
13 Nelson VIVAS 18.10.69
14 Mauricio POCHETTINO 2.3.73
15 Eduardo BERIZZO 13.11.69
17 Claudio HUSAIN 20.11.74

MIDFIELDERS
5 Diego SIMEONE 28.4.70
8 Javier ZANETTI 10.8.73
16 Andres GUGLIELMINPIETRO 10.4.74
18 Diego CAGNA 19.4.70
20 Pablo AIMAR 3.11.79
21 Cristian GONZALEZ 4.8.74
22 Juan RIQUELME 24.6.78

FORWARDS
7 Guillermo BARROS SCHELOTTO 4.5.73
9 Martin PALERMO 7.11.73
10 Ariel ORTEGA 4.3.74
11 Gustavo LOPEZ 13.4.73
19 Jose Luis CALDERON 24.10.70

BOLIVIA

COACH: Hector Veira

GOALKEEPERS
1 Jose Carlos FERNANDEZ 24.1.73
12 Sergio GALARZA 28.5.75

DEFENDERS
2 Juan Manuel PENA 17.1.73
3 Marco SANDY 29.8.71
4 Miguel RIMBA 1.1.67
5 Oscar SANCHEZ 16.7.71
8 Ruben TUFINO 9.1.70
14 Adrian Ubaldo LOZANO 17.5.72
18 Gustavo QUINTEROS 15.2.65
19 Ivan CASTILLO 11.7.70

MIDFIELDERS
6 Fernando OCHOAIZPUR 18.3.71
10 Marco ETCHEVERRY 26.9.70
13 Luis Antonio LIENDO 25.2.78
15 Luis Hector CHRISTALDO 31.8.69
16 Vladimir SORIA 15.7.61
17 Miguel Raul JUSTINIANO 29.9.77
20 Renny RIBERA 30.1.74
21 Erwin SANCHEZ 19.10.69

FORWARDS
7 Limberg GUTIERREZ 19.11.77
9 Jaime MORENO 19.1.74
11 Milton COIMBRA 4.5.75
22 Victor ANTELO 2.11.64

BRAZIL

COACH: Wanderley Luxemburgo

GOALKEEPERS
Nelson De Jesus Silva, DIDA 7.10.73
MARCOS Roberto Silveira Reis

CHILE

COACH: Nelson Acosta

GOALKEEPERS
1 Marcelo RAMIREZ 29.5.65

COLOMBIA

COACH: Javier Alvarez

GOALKEEPERS
1 Miguel CALERO 14.4.71
12 Rene HIGUITA 27.8.66
22 Agustin JULIO 25.10.74

DEFENDERS
2 Ivan CORDOBA 11.8.76
3 Roberto Carlos CORTES 20.7.77
5 Jorge BERMUDEZ 18.6.71
16 Jersson GONZALEZ 16.2.75
18 Rubiel QUINTANA 26.6.78
21 Mario Alberto YEPES 13.1.76

MIDFIELDERS
4 Alexander VIVEROS 8.10.77
6 Juan Carlos RAMIREZ 22.3.72
8 Harold LOZANO 30.3.73
10 Neider MORANTES 3.8.75
13 Jorge BOLANO 28.4.77
14 Arley BETANCOURT 4.3.75
15 Pedro PORTOCARRERO 13.5.77
17 Jhonnier MONTANO 14.1.83
20 Freddy GRISALES 22.9.75

FORWARDS
7 Edwin CONGO 7.10.76
9 Victor BONILLA 23.1.71
11 Henry ZAMBRANO 7.8.73
19 Hamilton RICARD 12.1.74

ECUADOR

COACH: Carlos Sevilla

GOALKEEPERS
1 Jose CEVALLOS 17.4.71
22 Geovanny IBARRA 8.9.69

DEFENDERS
2 Dannes CORONEL 24.5.73
3 Ivan HURTADO 16.8.74
4 Franklin ANANGONO 4.12.74
5 Alberto MONTANO 23.3.70
6 Ulises DE LA CRUZ 8.2.74
14 Marlon AYOVI 27.9.71
17 Fricson GEORGE 18.9.74
18 Bolivar GOMEZ 31.7.77
21 Holger QUINONEZ 12.2.62

MIDFIELDERS
7 Luis MOREIRA 23.9.78
8 Jimmy BLANDON 20.11.69
10 Alex AGUINAGA 8.7.68
15 Moises CANDELARIO 24.8.78
16 Hector CARABALI 15.2.72
19 Jairo ZAMORA 5.2.78
20 Wellington SANCHEZ 19.6.74

FORWARDS
9 Ariel GRAZIANI 7.6.71
11 Nicolas ASCENCIO 25.4.75
12 Ivan KAVIEDES 24.10.77
13 Agustin DELGADO 23.12.74

JAPAN

GOALKEEPERS
20 Seigo NARAZAKI 15.4.76

DEFENDERS
2 Toshihide SAITO 20.4.73
3 Naoki SOMA 19.7.71
4 Masami IHARA 19.8.67
5 Yutaka AKITA 6.8.70
6 Toshihiro HATTORI 23.9.73
14 Hideto SUZUKI 7.10.74
17 Ryuzo MORIOKA 7.10.75
18 Masahiro ANDO 2.4.72

MIDFIELDERS
7 Teruyoshi ITO 31.8.74
8 Shigeyoshi MOCHIZUKI 9.7.73
10 Hiroshi NANAMI 28.11.72
13 Toshiya FUJITA 4.10.71
15 Kazuaki TASAKA 3.8.71
16 Daisuke OKU 7.2.76
19 Atsuhiro MIURA 24.7.74
22 Takashi FUKUNISHI 1.9.76

FORWARDS
9 Kota YOSHIHARA 2.2.78
11 Wagner LOPES 29.12.69
12 Shoji JO 17.6.75
21 Masayuki OKANO 25.7.72

MEXICO

GOALKEEPERS
1 [illegible] 15.10.66
12 Oscar PEREZ 1.2.73
22 Adolfo RIOS 11.12.66

DEFENDERS
2 Claudio SUAREZ 17.12.68
3 Joel SANCHEZ 17.8.74
4 Rafael MARQUEZ 13.2.79
13 Pavel PARDO 26.7.76
14 Isaac TERRAZAS 23.1.73
18 Salvador CARMONA 22.8.75
21 Sergio ALMAGUER 16.5.69

MIDFIELDERS
5 Gerardo TORRADO 30.4.79
6 Raul Rodrigo LARA 28.2.73
7 Ramon RAMIREZ 5.12.69
8 Alberto GARCIA ASPE 11.5.67
9 Paulo Cesar CHAVEZ 7.1.76
16 Salvador CABRERA 21.8.73
19 Miguel ZEPEDA 5.5.76
20 Rafael GARCIA 14.8.74

FORWARDS
10 Cuauhtemoc BLANCO 17.1.73
11 Daniel OSORNO 16.3.79
15 Luis HERNANDEZ 22.12.68
17 Francisco PALENCIA 28.4.73

PARAGUAY

COACH: Ever Almeida

GOALKEEPERS
1 Ricardo TAVARELLI 2.8.70
12 Justo VILLAR 30.6.77
22 Danilo ACEVAL 15.11.75

DEFENDERS
2 Francisco ARCE 2.4.71
3 Celso AYALA 20.8.70
4 Carlos GAMARRA 17.2.71
5 Delio TOLEDO 10.2.76
7 Diego GAVILAN 1.3.80
19 Silvio SUAREZ 5.2.69
20 Juan CACERES 6.10.73
21 Denis CANIZA 20.8.74

MIDFIELDERS
6 Julio ENCISO 8.2.69
8 Roberto ACUNA 25.3.72
10 Guido ALVARENGA 24.8.70
13 Carlos ESTIGARRIBIA 21.11.74
14 Nelson CUEVAS 10.12.80
16 Carlos GONZALEZ 30.3.76
17 Carlos PAREDES 16.7.76

FORWARDS
9 Miguel Angel BENITEZ 19.5.70
11 Roque SANTA CRUZ 16.8.81
15 Mauro CABALLERO 3.5.72
18 Hugo OVELAR 21.2.71

PERU

COACH: Juan Carlos Oblitas

GOALKEEPERS
1 Oscar IBANEZ 8.8.67
12 Miguel MIRANDA 13.8.66
21 Leao BUTRON 6.3.77

DEFENDERS
2 Miguel REBOSIO 20.10.76
3 Juan REYNOSO 28.12.69
4 Percy OLIVARES 5.6.68
6 Jose SOTO 11.12.70
14 Jorge SOTO 27.10.71
16 Luis GUADALUPE 3.4.76
18 Jose CHACON 6.11.71
20 Javier SORIA 15.12.74

MIDFIELDERS
5 Jose PEREDA 8.9.73
7 Nolberto SOLANO 12.12.74
8 Juan JAYO 20.12.73
10 Roberto PALACIOS 28.12.72
13 Juan VELASQUEZ 20.3.71
19 Marko CIURLIZZA 22.2.78

FORWARDS
9 Flavio MAESTRI 21.11.73
11 Claudio PIZARRO 3.10.78
15 Andres MENDOZA 26.3.78
17 Roberto HOLSEN 10.8.76
22 Israel ZUNIGA 27.8.76

URUGUAY

COACH: Victor Pua

GOALKEEPERS
1 Fabian CARINI 26.12.79
12 Alvaro NUNEZ 11.5.73

DEFENDERS
2 Diego LOPEZ 22.8.74
3 Fernando PICUN 14.2.72
4 Leonel PILIPAUSKAS 18.5.75
14 Alejandro LEMBO 15.2.78
15 Fabian PUMAR 14.2.76
17 Martin DEL CAMPO 24.5.75
22 Federico BERGARA 29.12.78

MIDFIELDERS
5 Andres FLEURQUIN 8.2.75
6 Gianni GUIGOU 22.2.75
7 Walter COELHO 20.1.77
8 Liber VESPA 18.10.71
10 Federico MAGALLANES 22.8.76
13 Inti PODESTA 23.4.78
16 Marcelo ROMERO 4.7.76
18 Pablo GARCIA 11.5.77
20 Christian CALLEJAS 17.5.78

FORWARDS
9 Marcelo ZALAYETA 5.12.78
11 Gabriel ALVEZ 26.12.74
19 Diego ALONSO 16.5.75
21 Antonio PACHECO 11.4.76

VENEZUELA

COACH: Jose Omar Pastoriza

GOALKEEPERS
1 Renny VEGA 4.7.79
12 Manuel SANHOUSE 16.12.75

DEFENDERS
2 Rolando ALVAREZ 14.12.75
3 Jorge ROJAS 1.10.77
4 David McINTOSH 17.2.73
6 Jose Manuel REY 20.5.75
9 Juan GARCIA 16.4.70
17 Miguel ECHENAUSI 21.2.68

MIDFIELDERS
5 Hector BIDOGLIO 5.2.68
8 Edson TORTOLERO 27.8.71
10 Gabriel URDANETA 7.1.76
11 Felix HERNANDEZ 18.4.73
13 Alexander RONDON 30.8.77
15 Miguel MEA VITALI 19.2.81
16 Ricardo DUNO 19.3.77
18 Gerson CHACON 27.10.80
21 Jose VERA 9.2.69

FORWARDS
7 Daniel NORIEGA 30.3.77
14 Leopoldo JIMENEZ 22.5.78
19 Juan ARANGO 16.5.80
20 Cristian CASSERES 29.6.77
22 Ruberth MORAN 11.8.73

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Girls take Ame

Raising the Cup...the victorious Americans with FIFA president Sepp Blatter

Andrew Warshaw reports on a ground-breaking tournament

BY ANY stretch of the imagination, they were three remarkable weeks. Sell-out crowds including 90,185, a world record attendance for a single women's sporting event, at the Final; packed press conferences; countless TV appearances by the players; and, for the host nation and eventual champions, a downtown rally in New York that stopped the traffic and had the lunch-time crowd gawking in disbelief.

Not even the most ardent supporters of women's soccer could quite believe what they saw when the women's World Cup took the United States by storm and captivated a new generation of young sports fans.

Unlike the men's World Cup held in the USA in 1994, this was not about trying to convert a nation of predominantly male fans more comfortable with baseball and American football. In what is surely one of sport's great paradoxes, women's soccer, ignored by so much of the western world, is wholeheartedly embraced in the US, whereas the men's game has not really managed to penetrate the sporting psyche.

Anyone who was present at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena on July 10 could have seen the galvanising effect. Painted faces, tattooed arms, the car parks full two hours before kick-off. It was 1994, when Brazil beat Italy at the same venue, all over again. Except that this was a women's soccer match.

The game was no classic. Chances were few and far between, the Americans physically stronger, the Chinese more naturally gifted. It was nowhere near as technically sophisticated as a men's World Cup match but nor were there any of the cynical fouls that have come to characterise so much of men's pro soccer.

With the shirt-sleeved crowd cheering their every attack, the Americans had the better of the 90 minutes, coping better than many had expected with the speedy Chinese forwards.

But once the veteran Michelle Akers, far more influential than superstar millionairess Mia Hamm, had gone off with heat exhaustion at the end of normal time (she was so sick she had to recuperate in California for several days), the Chinese had their best spell. They could have ruined the party nine minutes into the first period of sudden-death extra time, when Fan Yunjie's header was cleared off the line. But perhaps, after the rollercoaster ride of the previous three weeks, it was destined to be America's day; in the ensuing shoot-out, each penalty was struck with cool accuracy except one, which Briana Scurry brilliantly saved one-handed.

After the last penalty went in, the pitch was covered with silver glitter, spewed out of a dozen giant canons. That could happen only in America, perhaps, but it was a remarkable climax to an equally remarkable tournament.

It should be noted that the Women's World Cup was first held only eight years ago, when the United States won, ironically, in China. Few in the western world were too bothered then or when the competition was staged in Sweden four years ago, and won by Norway. Which makes the sudden explosion all the more surprising. Or does it?

Not according to Bob Contiguglia, head of the US Soccer Federation (USSF). "Our men's professional league is only four years old and we have to catch up," he said. "With the women we are ahead of the rest because we started earlier."

Certainly interest might have waned had the US team not reached the Final and there are those who wonder whether it will all be a passing phase. The success of its team caught the USSF somewhat on the hop, but within a few days of the team's victory the paltry £8,000 bonuses originally promised to the players if they won the title was increased to £33,000.

Tony DiCicco, the US coach, believes it will now be impossible to turn back the tidal wave of interest, at least in his country. DiCicco says the women's game is now too advanced to suffer the problems of acceptance that have long plagued the men's game, even if some people may not care to admit it. "There will still be some not happy about what has transpired here," he said. "But they won't be able to come out and publicly announce that. They will wait for their turn to squash soccer in the future. But what's happened here is in motion."

Which is something the marketeers failed to recognise and, as a consequence, missed out big time. A huge marketing opportunity was lost, with World Cup products selling in any quantity only at the venues, and conspicuous by their absence elsewhere.

"Merchandising was a missed opportunity," said June McIvor, chief operating officer of the tournament. "Retailers under-estimated what the event was about and by the time they understood it was too late."

The question now, of course, is whether all the interest can be sustained. Already the US women's team have been relegated to the sports pages of American newspapers, after being front-page news in the aftermath of their success. And calls for a professional women's league have been treated with caution by US soccer officials even though, unlike MLS, it could attract the best players in the world.

What's more, television stations are unconvinced about the sport's long-term attractiveness. Although ABC's coverage of the Final attracted an astonishing 40 million viewers – more than for the 1994 World Cup Final and a record for any soccer match in the US – there are no plans to televise the women's game regularly. "We're interested but a lot depends on whether the team win the Olympics next year," said ABC president Howard Katz.

'The question now is whether all the interest can be sustained'

Nevertheless, everyone associated with the tournament is understandably glowing with pride. None more so that Marla Messing, the tournament's chief executive officer. When FIFA wanted the competition staged in small, low-key stadiums, Messing persuaded the world governing body that it should be run on the same lines as the men's event five years before.

The result was 658,000 tickets sold for 32 matches, shattering once and for all the myth that spectators will not watch women's sport. "It was a huge risk," said Messing. "We would have looked silly if we had 3,500 people show up in an 80,000 stadium. It was a choice

rica by storm

between sealing the fate of the tournament before it started or letting it reach its potential."

Whatever your feelings about the women's game, and there is still a huge barrier of prejudice to break down in many countries, the fact remains that the tournament struck a huge blow for women's sport. The most worrying issue now is whether it has set standards that will be impossible for future hosts to match.

Women's soccer may have arrived in the US but on the other side of the Atlantic, its credibility is still being evaluated. Even Messing admits that the World Cup is unlikely to be the same again – wherever it is staged. "Nobody is going to expect it to be quite like it was here," she said. "There won't be another one quite like it. But hopefully we can continue to build."

Briana and Brandi in bother

AMERICAN players Briana Scurry, who made the vital shoot-out save, and Brandi Chastain, who scored with the last penalty, were mobbed by ecstatic team-mates as the match ended, but were soon embroiled in controversy.

Scurry admitted that she broke the rules by moving forward before the ball was kicked. "I took a few steps," she said. "Every goalkeeper does it – it's only cheating if you get caught."

This blatantly professional outlook provoked protest after protest. So too did Chastain's action in taking off her shirt and waving it in, she claimed, a joyful moment of celebration.

Star in her bra...last-kick heroine Brandi Chastain

Although she added that she "didn't even know what bra I had on", manufacturer Nike is expecting to cash in by rushing out more of the specially-designed sports model she was wearing. Brandi and her bra were seen on nationwide TV – and her actions will form the basis of a new advertising campaign.

The two incidents have led to a big 'for and against' debate, some people admiring the girls for their actions and others siding with one columnist, Andrea Peyser, who wrote: "The women of the US soccer team are proving as graceless and greedy as pro athletes can be."

Packed out...the Final attracted a record crowd

Foot in...the USA's Cindy Parlow stretches for the ball

HOW THE CUP WAS WON

FIRST ROUND

Group A

June 19	USA-Denmark	3-0
June 20	North Korea-Nigeria	1-2
June 24	USA-Nigeria	7-1
June 24	North Korea-Denmark	3-1
June 27	Nigeria-Denmark	2-0
June 27	USA-North Korea	3-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USA	3	3	0	0	13	1	9
NIGERIA	3	2	0	1	5	8	6
Nth Korea	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Denmark	3	0	0	3	1	8	0

Group B

June 19	Brazil-Mexico	7-1
June 20	Germany-Italy	1-1
June 24	Brazil-Italy	2-0
June 24	Germany-Mexico	6-0
June 27	Germany-Brazil	3-3
June 27	Mexico-Italy	0-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BRAZIL	3	2	1	0	12	4	7
GERMANY	3	1	2	0	10	4	5
Italy	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Mexico	3	0	0	3	1	15	0

Group C

June 19	Japan-Canada	1-1
June 20	Norway-Russia	2-1
June 23	Norway-Canada	7-1
June 23	Japan-Russia	0-5
June 26	Canada-Russia	1-4
June 26	Norway-Japan	4-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
NORWAY	3	3	0	0	13	2	9
RUSSIA	3	2	0	1	10	3	6
Canada	3	0	1	2	3	12	1
Japan	3	0	1	2	1	10	1

Group D

June 19	China-Sweden	2-1
June 20	Australia-Ghana	1-1
June 23	Australia-Sweden	1-3
June 23	China-Ghana	7-0
June 26	China-Australia	3-1
June 26	Ghana-Sweden	0-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CHINA	3	3	0	0	12	2	9
SWEDEN	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Australia	3	0	1	2	3	7	1
Ghana	3	0	1	2	1	10	1

Quarter-finals

June 30	China-Russia	2-0
June 30	Norway-Sweden	3-1
July 1	USA-Germany	3-2
July 1	Brazil-Nigeria	4-3 (aet)

Semi-finals

July 4	USA-Brazil	2-0
July 4	China-Norway	5-0

Third place play-off

July 10	Norway-Brazil	0-0

Brazil won 5-4 on pens

Final

July 10	USA-China	0-0

Aet. USA won 5-4 on pens

Italy leads the spending spree

Gavin Hamilton and Keir Radnedge on why the serious money is in Serie A

World record fee...Christian Vieri

ITALY has reassumed its traditional place at the apex of the international transfer market – ahead of England and Spain – because vast new financial resources are now to hand as the media battle intensifies to sign the big clubs to long-term deals for digital (and pay-TV) broadcast rights.

Further evidence of the TV explosion will be available this coming season when Serie A takes the revolutionary step of breaking up its traditional unified Sunday League programme. Italy, oddly, has been the last major European country to succumb to the lure of TV cash, and enormous controversy has been stirred up by the League and federation's decision to 'rebuild' the Italian football weekend.

This season, two Serie A matches will be played on Saturdays, one at 3pm and the other at 8.30pm. Of the remaining seven games, six will be played as usual on Sunday afternoon, and one on Sunday night at 8.30pm. Teams playing in European cups also have the right to switch games forward to Saturday to allow an extra day of rest. Serie B – which took one match out to Saturday night for TV last season – will move one match forward to Friday and push one back to Monday. The projected TV income this coming season is around £320million.

'Serie A is breaking up its traditional Sunday programme'

Inter's signing of Christian Vieri, in a deal worth £31m, makes them the biggest spenders over the summer. But there were other important deals. New coach Marcello Lippi has returned to his old club Juventus for goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi and brought in Juve old boy Vladimir Jugovic from Atletico Madrid. Laurent Blanc, Cyrille Domoraud and Christian Panucci have arrived to reinforce the Inter defence.

Lazio coach Sven Goran Eriksson sanctioned the sale of Vieri after signing Juan Veron from Parma. Aside from the wrangling over Nicolas Anelka, Lazio have signed two other strikers, Simone Inzaghi and Kennet Andersson, as well as Argentinian defender Nestor Sensini from Parma. Diego Simeone, valued at £6m, was the reluctant makeweight in the Vieri deal.

Parma have spent big in anticipation of their Champions League reappearance, with Marcio Amoroso arriving from Udinese for a club record £22m, and Marco Di Vaio from Salernitana. Michele Serena and Stefano Torrisi, signed by Arrigo Sacchi at Atletico Madrid, have also arrived. They could yet be joined by Ariel Ortega from Sampdoria.

Juventus, aiming to qualify for the UEFA Cup via the pre-season InterToto Cup, have brought in some promising players: recently-capped Gianluca Zambrotta, Dutch goalkeeper Edwin Van der Sar and Nigerian midfielder Sunday Oliseh. A club record £14m was spent on Yugoslav striker Darko Kovacevic, once of Sheffield Wednesday, from Real Sociedad.

Another club record was set in Milan where the champions confirmed the long-awaited transfer of Ukrainian striker Andrii Shevchenko for £15.7m. Brazilian defender Serginho (£5m from Sao Paulo) was Milan's other main signing.

Fiorentina also have been busy. Predrag Mijatovic, Enrico Chiesa and Abel Balbo have joined Angelo Di Livio in the new arrivals lounge (*see page 36*).

Roma, so conscious of being upstaged by their city rivals Lazio, invested heavily in young talent, paying Sampdoria £15m for Vincenzo Montella and signing Argentina defender Walter Samuel from Boca Juniors for close on £14m.

In Spain, Barcelona and Real Madrid have been spending freely, but the summer activity did not match the boom of two years ago, when Betis signed Denilson for a then world record £22m.

Dani, once rejected by Real Madrid, moves to Barça from Mallorca for £10m. He joins the £9.2m Portuguese teenager Simao Sabrosa, while the Ajax connection is maintained with the signing of the out-of-contract Jari Litmanen.

Real broke the club transfer record to sign Elvir Baljic from Fenerbahce for £10m. He joins right-back Michel Salgado, libero Ivan Helguera, Colombian Edwin Congo and Steve McManaman.

Similarly, England has not matched Italy's boom. Only Liverpool, Chelsea and Newcastle spent freely, with Anelka's protracted move to Lazio delaying Arsenal's deals.

In Germany, Bayern recruited Paraguayan teenager Roque Santa Cruz and Brazilian Paulo Sergio, but have contract problems with Mario Basler. Dortmund were more active, bringing in strikers Fredi Bobic and Victor Ikpeba plus defender Christian Worns.

In France, a mini-boom has been led by Lyon, who paid a French record for Sonny Anderson, signed Lens striker Tony Vairelles and brought back Pierre Laigle to France from Sampdoria. Elsewhere, the trend for Frenchmen returning home from abroad continued with Jocelyn Blanchard joining Lens from Juventus, Stephane Ziani leaving Deportivo La Coruna for Bordeaux, and Stephane Guivarc'h rejoining Auxerre from Rangers.

Ajax and PSV are busy in a bid to close the gap on Feyenoord in Holland. As well as paying a club record £6m for Nikos Machlas, Ajax have brought back old boys Aron Winter, Frank Verlaat and goalkeeper Stanley Menzo.

One player who ignored the summer transfer market was Argentinian goalkeeper Carlos Roa. He has left Mallorca, and retired from the game, in order to dedicate his life to God.

Davids, the eternal misfit

Keir Radnedge on the Dutch rebel attracting interest in the summer transfer market

MANCHESTER United have enquired. So have Roma. Even top-heavy Barcelona have considered a bid. But can any of them honestly be sure they can tame Edgar Davids – the most outstanding all-round footballer to feature in the summer transfer speculation?

For while Davids may be a graduate of the Ajax academy of football intellectuals, they could never control the street fighter in him. Indeed, Davids once proved the point in appropriate style, soon after his transfer to Milan in the summer of 1996. The Dutchman had stopped his Porsche at traffic lights when it was attacked by two would-be muggers. Instead of driving off, Davids stepped out of the car and gave both a beating.

But then, he has never shied away from confrontation. Quite the reverse, Davids appears to thrive on it. No matter whether the opponent is a hooligan, his own coach, team-mate or opponent.

Friends in the Ajax youth school feared his temper. They nicknamed Davids 'Pitbull' because he was just as likely to confront a team-mate who misplaced a pass as an opponent whose tackle was a fraction too late or whose elbow flew an inch too high.

In the 1970s Ajax had developed a reputation for playing 'total football' of athletic grace and poise, as personified by Johan Cruyff. But within a decade a new generation – many of them kids from poor immigrant families from Surinam – had brought a raw new edge to the club and its classic style.

Davids, born in Paramaribo, Surinam, but raised in Holland, was the heart of the new wave along with Clarence Seedorf and Patrick Kluivert. They identified with each other, resented every racial slight – whether real or imagined – and mistrusted the older players and coaches.

Patience is not one of Davids' qualities. He has a hunger to win everything as quickly as possible. By the time he was 24 he had won the Champions Cup, the European Supercup, the UEFA Cup, the World Club Cup, three Dutch League titles and one Dutch Cup. He recovered from a career-threatening eye injury in time to force his way into Holland's 22 at Euro 96.

But Davids and his clique were ill at ease within a squad which has always suffered from too much player power. He performed poorly in the opening 0-0 draw against Scotland and then appeared only fleetingly as a substitute against Switzerland.

Davids, furious, used a TV interview as the opportunity to accuse coach Guus Hiddink of preferring the veteran white players rather than the brash blacks. Hiddink, equally angry, asked Davids to apologise. Davids said he regretted the words but not the sentiment – and was immediately sent home.

Fighting spirit...Edgar Davids

Davids disappeared from the Holland scene for almost two years. The fact that Hiddink did not recall him until shortly before the World Cup in France last year was not merely down to lingering anger.

In the wake of Euro 96, Davids quit Ajax for Milan. But this was a Milan in freefall. Davids broke a leg, then fell out with coach Fabio Capello. Nothing went right. But he learned his lesson and was not too proud to admit it. Davids says: "Going to Milan was a big mistake. It was a bad time, the most bitter experience of my club career. But I have tried to use it in a positive way. It has allowed me to change and mature as a person. It taught me that being a world-class footballer is about being in control."

But not all the time.

That was why, in the middle of the 1997-98 season, Juventus bought Davids to breathe fire back into their faltering Champions League campaign.

"This is a one-man engine room for my team," said coach Marcello Lippi as Davids drove Juventus past Kyiv Dynamo and Monaco to the Final. They lost 1-0 to Real Madrid – in Amsterdam.

Davids still cannot understand why. He had dominated the first half while treading a fine line physically – he had been booked once and came close to a second. Juve's defeat could not be laid at his door. That had been exemplary Davids, the world-class enforcer whose talents demanded Hiddink sue for peace in time for Holland's assault on France 98.

He was at his most dynamic in the second round tie against Yugoslavia, which he climaxed with the late winning goal. "Davids – what an animal!" said Slav sweeper Sinisa Mihajlovic, choosing words which expressed not an insult but unbridled admiration.

No wonder Davids grew restless last term as Juventus slid down Serie A and then, despite his all-action best endeavours at Old Trafford, fell to Manchester United in the Champions League semi-finals.

The midfielder demands only the best stage. As he says: "The higher the stakes, the tougher the fight, the more fired up I get. I can deliver. I am a winner." Nobody in Holland or Italy would dare contradict him. The question is, with which club will he be winning next season?

The summer's top 20 transfers

Ita	Christian Vieri	Lazio to Inter	£31million
Ita	Marcio Amoroso	Udinese to Parma	£21m
Ita	Juan Veron	Parma to Lazio	£19m
Ita	Andrii Shevchenko	Kyiv Dynamo to Milan	£15.7m
Ita	Vincenzo Montella	Sampdoria to Roma	£15.3m
Ita	Darko Kovacevic	Real Sociedad to Juventus	£14m
Ita	Walter Samuel	Boca Juniors to Roma	£13m
Spa	Elvir Baljic	Fenerbahce to Real Madrid	£10m
Spa	Dani	Mallorca to Barcelona	£10m
Ita	Simone Inzaghi	Piacenza to Lazio	£10m
Ita	Angelo Peruzzi	Juventus to Inter	£10m
Eng	Chris Sutton	Blackburn to Chelsea	£10m
Ita	Gianluca Zambrotta	Bari to Juventus	£10m
Spa	Simao Sabrosa	Sporting Lisbon to Barcelona	£9.2m
Fra	Sonny Anderson	Barcelona to Lyon	£9m
Ita	Enrico Chiesa	Parma to Fiorentina	£8.5m
Spa	Michel Salgado	Celta Vigo to Real Madrid	£7.8m
Ita	Marco Di Vaio	Salernitana to Parma	£7m
Ger	Roque Santa Cruz	Olimpia to Bayern Munich	£6.75m

Machlas: 'Ajax was the best choice'

EXCLUSIVE Nikos Machlas talks to Soulis Theodosiou

GREEK international Nikos Machlas, Europe's top scorer in 1997-98 with 34 goals for Dutch club Vitesse Arnhem, has joined Ajax in a £6million transfer. He talked to Soulis Theodosiou about his decision and what he expects to achieve with his new club.

WORLD SOCCER: How does it feel to be with a world-famous club such as Ajax?
NIKOS MACHLAS: I feel great. I am very happy about the signing. It was the best that I could expect, because I had always wanted to join such a club.

You had some offers from other clubs, such as Bayern Munich in Germany, and some from Spanish and Italian teams. Why did you choose Ajax?
Bayern made an offer and there were talks between them and Vitesse, but finally the clubs did not agree. I was not too keen on going to Bayern because I think that the German League wouldn't fit my style of playing. There were also offers from Valencia, Atletico Madrid, Fiorentina and other clubs, but I believed and I still believe that Ajax was the best choice for me.

New man in Amsterdam...Machlas in pre-season action for Ajax

Do you believe that Dutch football fits your style?
I'm still here in Holland after three years. Yes, I do believe it.

That means that you have changed your mind, because a few months ago you wanted to leave Holland.
It's true that I wanted to play in Spain but since the offers that I had were not the ones that I wanted, I could not accept them. Both Valencia and Atletico wanted me, but I don't think they would be able to offer me what I wanted.

After a poor spell, Ajax are trying to reach the top again, in Holland and in Europe. It's obvious that they expect a lot of help from you.
I know very well that in the last few years Ajax have lacked a player who would get in the box and score a lot of goals. The people at the club believed that it would be the best solution for them to sign me, and I believed that it was the best choice for me, as well. I will do my best to help the expectations of Ajax fans come true. I want to score a lot of goals, and it's a big honour for me to wear an Ajax jersey – especially the number nine.

You score plenty of goals in the Dutch League but not so many with the Greek national team. How do you explain that?
The biggest problem with the national team is that the players don't have much time together. It's not a personal problem, not scoring many goals. It's a problem for everyone. We didn't get enough goals, so we didn't qualify for the European Championship. And that's sad.

What can you promise the Ajax fans?
I don't like to give promises. I'll just say that now Ajax have a lot of quality players and are on the way back to where the club belong – at the top.

Fans don't like to wait for success. Is this going to take a long time?
I would like to think we can reach the level of the team that won the Champions League in 1995, but let's not forget that all of those players have left and now there is a new generation of players trying to rebuild Ajax under different conditions.

Do you have personal targets, like being Europe's top scorer again?
When you are in a team sport these things go together. As a centre-forward I want to score many goals, but if the team doesn't reach its objectives, then that will have no meaning.

What were your dreams when you started to play football? Did you think that some day you could play for a club like Ajax?
I don't see things like that. I take one step at a time. When I started to play football I wanted to play for OFI in Crete. Then, I wanted to make the next step, which was to play in Europe. I went to Vitesse and I wanted to succeed there. When I did it, I thought about another transfer. I don't much think about the far future. Of course I have dreams but what I care about and what I try for is the next step. That's all. Things have turned out well for me so far, but that wasn't by accident.

England's new foreigners

Oleh Luzhnyi, Arsenal
Tough, speedy, experienced right-back who almost joined Benfica last season. Replacement for Lee Dixon. A host of other Premiership clubs were interested in signing the Kyiv Dynamo skipper, with Arsenal getting their man for a reported £1.8million.

Stefan Malz, Arsenal
German midfield warrior who was compared to Jens Jeremies by Werner Lorant, his club coach at 1860 Munich. A useful squad player who could turn out to be a bargain at £650,000.

Silvinho, Arsenal
Brazilian left-back, who at 25, is 10 years younger than current incumbent Nigel Winterburn. A Brazilian national championship winner with Corinthians.

Didier Deschamps, Chelsea
French World Cup-winning captain moved from Juventus for £3million. Twice a European Cup winner (Marseille 1993 and Juventus 1995), he was once famously dismissed as a "water carrier" by Eric Cantona.

Mario Melchiot, Chelsea
Dutch Under-21 international who was released by Ajax last season. Has a spider-like stature but will provide cover across defence and midfield.

Jes Hogh, Chelsea
A surprising signing, given his age (33) and the fact he was playing out his career in Turkey. A room-mate of fellow Chelsea man Bjarne Goldbaek on international duty for Denmark

Youssef Chippo, Coventry
Moroccan international who made a brief appearance as a teenager at the Barcelona Olympics before heading to earn petro-dollars at Al Arabi of Qatar. How will he cope with the switch to Coventry from FC Porto, where success at League level and participation in the Champions League were taken for granted?

Mustapha Hadji, Coventry
Outstanding forward and the current African Footballer of the Year. His signing, not confirmed at press time, would be a major boost for Coventry boss Gordon Strachan.

Eirik Bakke, Leeds
Young striker whose arrival at Elland Road fits in with manager David O'Leary's policy of promoting youth.

Sander Westerveld, Liverpool
Dutch goalkeeper who conceded 147 goals in 115 Dutch League games for Twente and Vitesse. His arrival hastened the departure from Anfield of David James.

Titi Camara, Liverpool
Guinea-born forward who joins Liverpool from the subs bench at Marseille after a patchy career with St-Etienne and Lens.

Sami Hyypia, Liverpool
Finnish centre-back and a major factor behind Willem II's success in Holland. *See profile, page 43.*

Highbury trio...(l-r) Oleh Luzhnyi, Stefan Malz, Silvinho

Eric Meijer, Liverpool
Much-travelled German striker (Bayer Leverkusen, Fortuna Sittard, Antwerp, MVV, Maastricht, PSV and KFC Uerdingen). Strong in the air.

Vladimir Smicer, Liverpool
The best of Gerard Houllier's summer purchases. A proven forward who has already scored at Anfield (for the Czech Republic against Russia during Euro 96). Joins Liverpool after a major contribution to Lens's success in France in recent seasons.

Marcelino, Newcastle
Centre-back with tough reputation (ask Dennis Wise) who made his international debut for Spain last season after starring in Mallorca's run to the European Cup-winners Cup Final. Previously with Sporting Gijon.

Alain Goma, Newcastle
Accomplished centre-back with two caps for France. A product of the Auxerre youth set-up who spent just one season with PSG.

Franck Dumas, Newcastle
Another defender to add to Ruud Gullit's growing collection. An intelligent sweeper and captain at Monaco. Started out at Caen and has 10 seasons of League action under his belt.

Gilles De Bilde, Sheffield Wed
Belgian striker who earned a reputation in his early days as a fiery hothead. A former Belgian Player of the Year, De Bilde joined PSV in controversial circumstances in March 1997 after he broke a defender's eye socket while playing for Anderlecht. He was banned for three months, during which time he moved to PSV, where he re-established his goalscoring credentials in their 1997 title-winning side.

Gerald Sibon, Sheffield Wed
Tall, Dutch striker who never managed to establish himself at Ajax following impressive scoring exploits for Twente, MVV and Roda.

Thomas Helmer, Sunderland
Veteran German international central defender who moves to the north-east on a free transfer from Bayern Munich. Not used in the Champions League Final, but made an impact with on-the-bench gestures criticising coach Ottmar Hitzfeld's substitutions.

Arrivals from overseas...Anfield's new foreign legion

England

Player	Pos	From	To
Oleh Luzhnyi	D	Kyiv Dynamo	Arsenal
Stefan Malz	M	1860 Munich	Arsenal
Silvinho	D	Corinthians	Arsenal
David James	G	Liverpool	Aston Villa
Gunnar Halle	D	Leeds	Bradford
Lee Sharpe	M	Leeds	Bradford
Martin Scott	D	Sunderland	Bradford
David Wetherall	D	Leeds	Bradford
Andy Myers	D	Chelsea	Bradford
Chris Sutton	F	Blackburn	Chelsea
Didier Deschamps	M	Juventus	Chelsea
Mario Melchiot	D	Ajax	Chelsea
Jes Hogh	D	Fenerbahce	Chelsea
Youssef Chippo	M	FC Porto	Coventry City
Mustapha Hadji	F	Dep La Coruna	Coventry City
Seth Johnson	M	Crewe	Derby
Kevin Campbell	F	Trabzonspor	Everton
Eirik Bakke	M	Sogndal	Leeds
Michael Duberry	D	Chelsea	Leeds
Danny Mills	D	Charlton	Leeds
Titi Camara	F	Marseille	Liverpool
Dietmar Hamann	M	Newcastle	Liverpool
Stephane Henchoz	D	Blackburn	Liverpool
Sami Hyypia	D	Willem II	Liverpool
Sander Westerveld	G	Vitesse Arnhem	Liverpool
Mark Bosnich	G	Aston Villa	Manchester United
Alain Goma	D	Paris St-Germain	Newcastle

Didier's challenge...Deschamps checks in at Chelsea

Player	Pos	From	To
Franck Dumas	D	Monaco	Newcastle
Marcelino Elena	D	Mallorca	Newcastle
Kieron Dyer	M	Ipswich	Newcastle
Gilles De Bilde	F	PSV Eindhoven	Sheffield Wed
Gerald Sibon	F	Ajax	Sheffield Wed
Simon Donnelly	F	Celtic	Sheffield Wed
Phil O'Donnell	M	Celtic	Sheffield Wed
Milen Petkov	M	CSKA Sofia	Southampton
Steve Bould	D	Arsenal	Sunderland
Thomas Helmer	D	Bayern Munich	Sunderland
Chris Perry	D	Wimbledon	Tottenham
Tore Pedersen	D	Eintracht Frankfurt	Wimbledon

France

Player	Pos	From	To
Stephane Guivarc'h	F	Rangers	Auxerre
Alexandre Comisetti	M	Grasshopper	Auxerre
Laurent Batlles	D	Toulouse	Bordeaux
Jerome Bonnissel	D	Dep La Coruna	Bordeaux
Teddy Richert	G	Toulouse	Bordeaux
Stephane Ziani	M	Dep La Coruna	Bordeaux
Jean-Ch. Rouviere	M	Montpellier	Bordeaux
Gustave Bahoken		Rouen	Le Havre
Jocelyn Blanchard	D	Juventus	Lens
Olivier Dacourt	M	Everton	Lens
Adama Coulibaly		Djoliba	Lens
Jocelyn Blanchard	D	Juventus	Lens
Joseph-Desire Job	M	Lyon	Lens
Sonny Anderson	F	Barcelona	Lyon
Pierre Laigle	M	Sampdoria	Lyon
Tony Vairelles	F	Lens	Lyon
Stephane Dalmat	M	Lens	Marseille
Eric Decroix	D	Nantes	Marseille
Lamine Diatta		Toulouse	Marseille
Kaba Diawara	F	Arsenal	Marseille
Sebastien Perez	M	Blackburn	Marseille
Stephane Trevisan	G	Guingamp	Marseille
Ibrahima Bakayoko	F	Everton	Marseille
Souleymane Oulare	F	Genk	Metz
Serhiy Skachenko	F	Torpedo Moscow	Metz
Marcelo Gallardo	M	River Plate	Monaco
Marco Simone	F	Paris Saint-Germain	Monaco
Roger Garcia	M	Barcelona	Monaco
Patrice Loko	F	Lorient	Montpellier
Reynald Pedros	F	Parma	Montpellier
Ali Benarbia	M	Bordeaux	Paris Saint-Germain
Laurent Robert	D	Montpellier	Paris Saint-Germain
Godwin Okpara	D	Strasbourg	Paris Saint-Germain
Cesar	D	Portuguesa	Paris Saint-Germain
Franck Gava	M	Monaco	Rennes
Tchiressoa Guel		Marseille	St Etienne
Pierre Njanka	D	Neuchatel Xamax	Strasbourg
Joseph Ndo	M	Neuchatel Xamax	Strasbourg
Mario Haas	F	Sturm Graz	Strasbourg

Germany

Player	Pos	From	To
Oliver Neuville	F	Hansa Rostock	Bayer Leverkusen
Robson Ponte	F	Guarani	Bayer Leverkusen
Bernd Schneider	M	Eintracht Frankfurt	Bayer Leverkusen
Roque Santa Cruz	F	Olimpia	Bayern Munich
Paulo Sergio	F	Roma	Bayern Munich
Andrew Sinkala	M	Nchanga Rangers	Bayern Munich
Patrik Andersson	D	Borussia MG	Bayern Munich
Otto Addo	M	Hannover	Borussia Dortmund
Fredi Bobic	F	Stuttgart	Borussia Dortmund
Christian Worns	D	Paris Saint-Germain	Borussia Dortmund
Otto Addo	M	Hannover	Borussia Dortmund
Victor Ikpeba	F	Monaco	Borussia Dortmund
Saed Kapetanovic	M	Wolfsburg	Borussia Dortmund
Giuseppe Reina	M	Arminia Bielefeld	Borussia Dortmund
Tibor Dombi	M	Debrecen	Eintracht Frankfurt
Horst Heldt	M	1860 Munich	Eintracht Frankfurt
Bachirou Salou	F	B Dortmund	Eintracht Frankfurt
Mehdi Mahdavikia	M	Bochum	Hamburg
Roy Prager	F	Wolfsburg	Hamburg
Nico Kovac	M	Bayer Leverkusen	Hamburg
Ali Daei	F	Bayern Munich	Hertha Berlin
Marko Rehmer	D	Hansa Rostock	Hertha Berlin
Sebastian Deisle	M	Borussia MG	Hertha Berlin
Kostas Konstantinidis	M	Panathinaikos	Hertha Berlin
Kai Michalke	F	Bochum	Hertha Berlin
Jeff Strasser	D	Metz	Kaiserslautern
Slobodan Komljenovic	M	Duisburg	Kaiserslautern
Jorgen Pettersson	F	Borussia MG	Kaiserslautern
Thomas Sobotzik	M	Eintracht Frankfurt	Kaiserslautern
Christian Prosenik	M	Rapid Wien	1860 Munich
Marcus Purk	M	Rapid Wien	1860 Munich
Thomas Hassler	M	Borussia Dortmund	1860 Munich
Tomas Votava	D	Sparta Prague	1860 Munich
Ebbe Sand	F	Brondby	Schalke
Nils Oude Kamphuis	M	Twente	Schalke
Frode Grodas	G	Racing Santander	Schalke (end of loan)
Thomasz Waldoch	D	Bochum	Schalke
Marcelo Jose Bordon	D	Sao Paulo	Stuttgart
Pavel Kuka	F	Nurnberg	Stuttgart
Ioan Ganea	F	Rapid Bucharest	Stuttgart

Bought by Bayer...Leverkusen's Oliver Neuville

Player	Pos	From	To
Jonathan Akpoborie	F	Stuttgart	Wolfsburg
Jean Banza Kasongo		CS Sfaxien	Wolfsburg
Dorinel Munteanu	M	Koln	Wolfsburg

Holland

Player	Pos	From	To
Brian Laudrup	F	FC Copenhagen	Ajax
Nikos Machlas	F	Vitesse Arnhem	Ajax
Stanley Menzo	G	Lierse	Ajax
Frank Verlaat	D	Stuttgart	Ajax
Aron Winter	M	Inter	Ajax
Jan Van Halst	D	Twente	Ajax
John Nieuwenburg	M	Sparta	Ajax
John Bosman	F	Twente	AZ
Thomas Rzasa	M	De Graafschap	Feyenoord
Jan De Visser	M	Heerenveen	Feyenoord
Eric Addo	M	Club Brugge	PSV Eindhoven
Mark Van Bommel	D	Fortuna Sittard	PSV Eindhoven
Johann Vogel	M	Grasshopper	PSV Eindhoven

Parma to Lazio...£20m Juan Veron

Player	Pos	From	To
Jan Heintze	D	Bayer Leverkusen	PSV Eindhoven
Ivica Kralj	G	FC Porto	PSV Eindhoven
Harald Wapenaar	G	Udinese	Utrecht
Pierre Van Hooijdonk	F	Nottm Forest	Vitesse Arnhem

ITALY

Player	Pos	From	To
Raphael Chukwu	F	Mamelodi Sundowns	Bari
Alessio De Stefani	D	Varese	Bari
Diego Markic	M	Argentinos Juniors	Bari
Jason Mayele	F	Chateauroux	Cagliari
Nicola Diliso	D	Vicenza	Cagliari
Enrico Chiesa	F	Parma	Fiorentina
Predrag Mijatovic	F	Real Madrid	Fiorentina
Daniele Adani	D	Brescia	Fiorentina
Abel Balbo	F	Parma	Fiorentina
Angelo Di Livio	D	Juventus	Fiorentina
Alessandro Pierini	D	Udinese	Fiorentina
Fabio Rossitto	M	Napoli	Fiorentina
Giuseppe Taglialatela	G	Napoli	Fiorentina
Christian Vieri	F	Lazio	Inter
Christian Panucci	D	Real Madrid	Inter
Angelo Peruzzi	G	Juventus	Inter
Laurent Blanc	D	Marseille	Inter
Cyrille Domoraud	D	Marseille	Inter
Vladimir Jugovic	M	Atletico Madrid	Inter
Jonathan Bachini	M	Udinese	Juventus
Andreas Isaksson	G	Trelleborgs	Juventus
Darko Kovacevic	F	Real Sociedad	Juventus
Sunday Oliseh	M	Ajax	Juventus
Gianluca Zambrotta	M	Bari	Juventus
Edwin Van der Sar	G	Ajax	Juventus
Kennet Andersson	F	Bologna	Lazio
Simone Inzaghi	F	Piacenza	Lazio
Juan Veron	M	Parma	Lazio
Diego Simeone	M	Inter	Lazio
Nestor Sensini	D	Parma	Lazio
Emiliano Billotti	F	Ravenna	Lecce
Gianluca Colonnello	D	Perugia	Lecce
Andrii Shevchenko	F	Kyiv Dynamo	Milan
Serginho	D	Sao Paulo	Milan
Diego De Ascentis	D	Bari	Milan
Dida	F	Cruizeiro	Milan
Gennar Gattuso	M	Salernitana	Milan
Pierluigi Orlandini	M	Parma	Milan
Max Tonetto	D	Empoli	Milan
Marcio Amoroso	F	Udinese	Parma
Marco Di Vaio	F	Salernitana	Parma
Michele Serena	D	Atletico Madrid	Parma
Stephen Appiah	D	Udinese	Parma
Roberto Breda	M	Salernitana	Parma
Luciano Galletti	F	Estudiantes	Parma
Anthony Seric	D	Hajduk Split	Parma
Stefano Torrisi	D	Atletico Madrid	Parma
Arturo Di Napoli	D	Empoli	Piacenza
Andrea Bernini	D	Montevarchi	Reggina
Francesco Antonioli	G	Bologna	Roma
Giuseppe Colucci	M	Foggia	Roma
Sergei Gurenko	D	Lok. Moscow	Roma
Cristiano Lupatelli	G	F. Andria	Roma
Vincenzo Montella	F	Sampdoria	Roma
Joseph Oshadogan	D	Foggia	Roma
Alessandro Rinaldi	D	Bologna	Roma
Walter Samuel	D	Boca Juniors	Roma
Djibril Diawara	D	Monaco	Torino
Marcus Lantz	M	Helsingborgs	Torino
Luigi Panarelli	D	Napoli	Torino
Roberto Muzzi	F	Cagliari	Udinese
Akwasi	M	Lugano	Udinese
Stefano Fiore	M	Parma	Udinese
David Pizarro	M	Wanderers	Udinese
Olivier Renard	G	Charleroi	Udinese
Warley	F	At. Paranaense	Udinese
Hirsohi Nanami	M	Jubilo Iwata	Venezia
Emiliano Salvetti	M	Cesena	Verona
Robert Spehar	F	Monaco	Verona

Madrid man...Real new boy Michel Salgado

Spain

Player	Pos	From	To
Toni Jimenez	G	Espanyol	Atletico Madrid
Carlos Gamarra	D	Corinthians	Atletico Madrid
Jari Litmanen	M	Ajax	Barcelona
Simao Sabrosa	F	Sporting Lisbon	Barcelona
Frederic Dehu	D	Lens	Barcelona
Daniel Garcia Lara, Dani	F	Mallorca	Barcelona
Miroslav Karhan	D	Spartak Trnava	Betis Sevilla
Marko Pantelic	F	Paris St-Germain	Celta
Roy Makaay	F	Tenerife	Dep La Coruna
Victor Sanchez	F	Racing Santander	Dep La Coruna
Ivan Perez	M	Bordeaux	Dep La Coruna
Balazs Molnar	M	Zalaegerszeg	Espanyol
Kiki Musampa	M	Bordeaux	Malaga
German Burgos	G	River Plate	Mallorca
Jorge Quinteros	F	Argentinos Juniors	Mallorca
Armando Alvarez	D	Dep La Coruna	Mallorca
Manel	M	Oviedo	Mallorca
Gert Claessens	M	Club Brugge	Oviedo
Marcelo Espina	F	Colo Colo	Racing Santander
Michel Salgado	D	Celta Vigo	Real Madrid
Edwin Congo	F	Once Caldas	Real Madrid
Elvir Baljic	F	Fenerbahce	Real Madrid
Ivan Helguera	D	Espanyol	Real Madrid
Steve McManaman	M	Liverpool	Real Madrid
Geremi Ndjitap	M	Genclerbirligi	Real Madrid
Victor Bonilla	F	Deportivo Cali	Real Sociedad
Oscar Garcia	M	Barcelona	Valencia
Juan Sanchez	F	Celta Vigo	Valencia

OTHERS

Player	Pos	From	To
Dariusz Adamczuk	M	Dundee	Rangers
Martin Amerhauser	M	Salzburg	Grazer AK
Faustino Asprilla	F	Parma	Palmeiras
Kwame Ayew	F	Boavista	Sporting Lisbon
Eyal Berkovic	M	West Ham	Celtic
Carlos Bossio	G	Estudiantes	Benfica
Alban Bushi	F	Litex Lovech	Adanaspor
Philippe Clement	M	Coventry	Club Brugge
Alexandru Curtianu	M	Hamburg	Zenit St Petersburg
Martin Dahlin	F	Hamburg	retired
Robert Enke	G	Borussia MG	Benfica
Abdullah Ercan	D	Trabzonspor	Fenerbahce
George Georgiadis	M	Newcastle	PAOK
Giovanni	M	Barcelona	Olympiakos
Nicolae Ilea	F	Debrecen	MTK
Kabwe Kasongo	D	Vitoria Guimaraes	Chaves
Dmitri Kharine	G	Chelsea	Celtic
Pal Lakos	D	Gyor	Ferencvaros
Mendonca		Primiero Agosto	FC Porto
Michael Mols	F	Utrecht	Rangers
Roger Nilsen	D	Tottenham	Grazer AK
Gbenga Okunowo	D	Barcelona	Benfica (loan)
Andres Oper	F	Flora Tallinn	AaB Aalborg
Marco Pascolo	G	Nottm Forest	Zurich
Mauricio Pellegrino	D	Barcelona	Velez Sarsfield
Stilian Petrov	M	CSKA Sofia	Celtic
Michel Preud'homme	G	Benfica	retired
Carlos Roa	G	Mallorca	retired
Ricardo Rojas	D	Estudiantes	Benfica
Dejan Savicevic	M	Red Star Belgrade	Rapid Wien
Peter Schmeichel	G	Manchester Utd	Sporting Lisbon
Ogun Temizkanoglu	D	Trabzonspor	Fenerbahce
Zlatko Zahovic	M	FC Porto	Olympiakos

Talking from

Fabio Capello and Marcello Lippi are the most successful Italian coaches of the 1990s. As they prepared for new challenges at Roma and Inter respectively, they talked to Dominique Antognoni

On a mission...Fabio Capello says that taking Roma into the Champions League is his top priority

CAPELLO: 'I have great ambition for Roma'

World Soccer: After sitting out the last 18 months of your contract with Milan – and taking all those holidays in the Caribbean, Marbella etc – how did your return to Roma come about?

Fabio Capello: The president, Franco Sensi, phoned me on the evening of May 29. He asked me if I would meet him and so the next day, a Sunday, we met at his villa. He's good to deal with. He knows what he wants. One of those targets is success for Roma and I think he came to me because he knows I am not a dreamer, I am a practical man. I am also ready to make Roma's ambitions my own. I have had a wonderful year's break from the game – I've seen a lot, learned a lot – and now I am impatient to get back to work.

It's a big change for Roma – going from Zdenek Zeman to Fabio Capello. You have very different football philosophies, don't you?

There's no point talking about the past. Sensi offered me an opportunity and I am happy to take it because I have always liked Rome from my time there as a player for Roma. I like the city, I like the people. If it had been up to me – all the way back then – I would happily have stayed in Rome. Instead, the president then, Marchini, decided to sell me to Juventus. But that's history.

Zeman has spent two years trying to get Roma to play entertaining football. Was he wrong?

Look, what's entertaining football? A team which possesses physical superiority and the technique of the Brazilians can entertain how and when it wants. But I believe that for the club and for the fans the most important thing is to win. Nothing else matters. Ask the fans of Bayern Munich if they are happy that their team controlled most of the Champions League Final. What do you think they will say?

What can you tell the Roma fans?

That coming here to win something with Roma is a splendid gamble, that I have great ambition for this club and I want to transmit that to my players. The reaction of the fans so far has been excellent. I hope that enthusiasm can be maintained throughout the season. But, then, the Roma fans have always been fantastic. Everyone knows it. Other clubs have always envied us the commitment and support of our public. It really is like having a 12th player on the pitch.

What have you promised the president?

The Champions League is top priority. We should be able to qualify for it next season without problems. But to do that we have to develop the mentality that allows us to compete with the very best clubs on equal terms, without feeling inferior. The foundation of the team is very good, we have plenty of good players. Now I want to turn Roma into a great team, in the fullest sense of the word – competitive from the first day of the season to the last.

How can you, who has won five championships in seven years, expect to win the League so quickly?

Never look back. What I achieved in the past is done and gone. All that matters is the season ahead – which includes the derby matches against Lazio. They will be some games! I have had a lot of experience of derbies throughout my career. In Milan at a very high level, in Turin at a frightening level. In Rome, the derby is the most passionate. We can certainly be quite as good as Lazio this season but we will have a greater will to win. Greater hunger.

What about new signings? Is it true you wanted Roma to sign Clarence Seedorf and Fernando Redondo, who were both key players for you at Real Madrid?

Seedorf, according to my old friend Pirri at Madrid, does not want to leave the club. As for Redondo, I don't know. But we are working hard behind the scenes to reach our objectives in redeveloping the squad. There are lots of great players around. Edgar Davids, for example. I was the one who pressed Milan to get him. Then things did not work out, unfortunately, and he had problems with injury. But he's a great player.

What about the players already at Roma?

Totti is fantastic, for a start, then Tommasi, Di Francesco, Zago, Cafu and Aldair are all internationals. I like Delvecchio – he's my kind of player – and Montella will complement him ideally in attack. There was some question of Delvecchio going to Chelsea – he was close to an agreement with them – but I put a stop to that. The same

the top

for Aldair. He wanted to go until I put him on the list of players who should be non-transferable. I think it was important for them both to know that the coach wanted them to be a part of Roma, just as it's important for the coach to feel he has the right mixture of players.

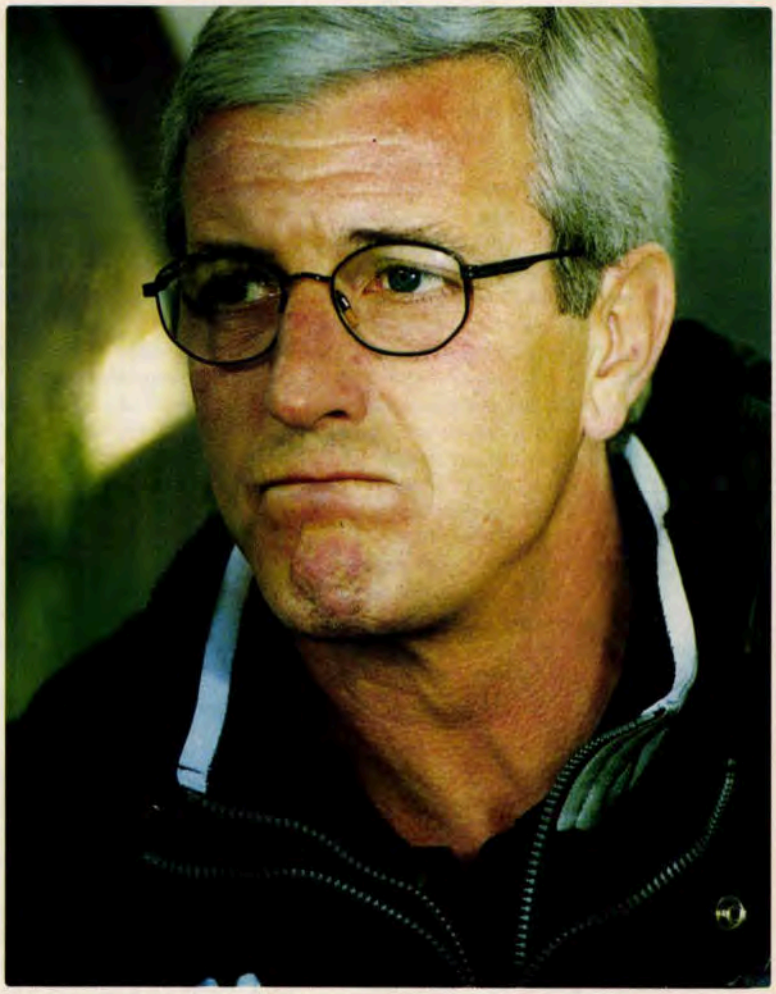
Roma have agreed to buy Walter Samuel, the young Boca Juniors defender. How good is he?
Right now, Samuel is potentially the most important South American player on the transfer market. He's an enormous talent. Probably he can't join us until later in the year, when the Argentine League season ends. I know it's inevitable he will have some problems adjusting to life and football in Italy but after that...the sky's the limit. As for other players, Celso Ayala won't be coming back. He's happy at Betis, I understand. Then we have brought in Antonioli, who was one of my goalkeepers at Milan. In fact, he was my first choice until he injured a knee.

Totti was furious when he learned that Zeman had been replaced as coach. Does that worry you?
Certainly not. I like a player who is open and honest and who knows how to respect a coach. I can work best with players like that. Then again, I must say that Totti is one of the finest players around at the moment. I think the role in which he was used last season was ideal for him – starting left of centre and with great freedom to move and express himself. He's a genius. He will have a great season, perhaps his greatest yet.

What will your tactical base be?
I am not a slave to one system. I have lots of ideas, whether it's 3-4-3 or 4-3-1-2 or something else. But the priority is to discuss things with the players, and discover what they feel comfortable with. We need to find a winning system but to do so everyone needs to be convinced it's right. I want to develop the balance that was obvious, I think, with my Milan and Real Madrid teams. But it all depends on the players. So, we'll see. We have the time to get it right.

CAPELLO: THE HONOURS

Milan:
Italian League 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996; European Cup 1994 (runners-up 1995); European Supercup 1994.
Real Madrid:
Spanish League 1997



All for one, one for all...Marcello Lippi aims to create a squad in which everyone supports each other

LIPPI: 'At Inter, everyone works to win'

What is your target at Inter?
Marcello Lippi: I want to construct a squad capable of supporting each other, of wanting the best for themselves and of battling from first minute to last. That's what I told them on our first training day together. Perhaps I did not present the ideal impression, still with cuts and bruises from a cycling accident. But there will be time to be elegant, relaxed and smiling when the season is over.

You take over Inter at what most people consider a difficult time in the club's history and after a bleak season. Is that how you see it?
That's fair. All great clubs, occasionally, go through these crises. It happened to Milan in the last few years before they regained the *scudetto* last season. Now it's happening at Juventus and it's been the same for Inter. A black year but not a tragedy – merely a few scenes of the play. Inter are still a great club where everyone works to win.

How would you describe your approach to your new job?
Highly motivated. I have just spent five important years with another great club and now I am looking forward to a great challenge. I know a lot is expected of me. That can be counter-productive but I take it as the greatest compliment.

In 1994, when you took over at Juve, they had not won the League for a decade. Now at Inter the situation is the same. Do you see any parallels?
I hope I will! I want to win a lot, quickly. Then the comparison will be a valid one. And why not? Look at our strike force: Christian Vieri ▶

'I do not want a team that is dependent on Ronaldo' – Marcello Lippi

and Ronaldo. If you went anywhere in the world and found a coach who did not dream of having these two together in his attack then he should hand in his coaching licence. I know the club's owner, Massimo Moratti, wanted to buy Lilian Thuram as well. People have asked me, if I had to choose between Vieri and Thuram which one would it have been, but I can't answer hypothetical questions. I have to deal in reality.

What type of team do you want to build?
Let's get this straight. I don't want just a team, I want a squad in which everyone tries to help one another, in which we have no jealousy, no prima donnas, just everyone sharing the same will to win. Of course, everyone starts the championship wanting to win but my players must want it more than all the rest. In 1994, at Juventus, I did not want a team that was dependent on Roberto Baggio. Now I can say quite clearly that, at Inter, I do not want a team that is dependent on Ronaldo. Everyone must stand on his own two feet. Why? Because first it's wrong to weigh down one player with a lot of extra responsibility. Then, if Ronaldo – for example – gets injured and does not play, the others start to panic because they don't know how to cope. I don't want that at any price. I want – I need – everyone working together at the same level.

Apart from Vieri there are other new players. In goal, for example – Pagliuca is out and you have signed Peruzzi from Juventus. Why?
Let's get another thing clear. Moratti brought me in to build a team from scratch. I have certain ideas in my mind and to make them come to fruition I need players whom I can work with. I made some precise requests to Moratti based only on technical reasons. Personalities have nothing to do with it. The ultimate responsibility is mine and thus I want to make sure I start this new challenge with players whom I consider ideal for the job.

You have a number of players with a history of injury problems. Is that wise?
Yes, I know all about the histories of Baggio, Jugovic, Sousa, Moriero, Peruzzi, as well as Ronaldo. But every player, from time to time, suffers fitness or injury problems. With hindsight it's possible to think that if Ronaldo had been treated differently after the World Cup last year then perhaps he would not have had the injury problems that persisted through to the end of the season. We took care at the Copa America that he had his personal trainer (File Petrone) with him virtually 24 hours a day. We cannot leave anything to chance – particularly after what happened to him before the World Cup Final.

At Inter you are meeting up again with Baggio. Will he have a place in your team?
He will have the opportunity a player of his calibre deserves. He can play well in a number of different roles – as a second striker, as a midfielder, as a link man behind the strikers. With Baggio available I can vary the pattern of our play however I like from one game to another. That's a luxury. I am not a slave to tactical shapes. There's not a lot to choose between 3-4-3 or 4-3-3. What I want is to have a solid foundation of seven or eight players who make up a block between defence and midfield. Then, for attack, I need at least another three players who do not always need to worry about chasing back all the time to help out in midfield. They should have freedom for their own work, to create openings and chances. That has to be their priority out on the pitch.

Is it an advantage or disadvantage to miss European competition?
A disadvantage. Nobody is happy to miss out on Europe. If you have top players then they want, naturally, to be playing in the most important competitions. They won't find it easy to watch other Italian clubs playing in Europe when they are not. Hopefully, we can turn this negative experience to good use. I said as much to Moratti. On the one hand we can concentrate on the championship. But I have asked Moratti to arrange so that at least once a month we play a big international friendly against quality opponents. The players need international experience.

Do you need fewer players in your squad if you are not in Europe?
I would say we need 22, 23 at most. Not 30. I would prefer, occasionally, to call up a couple of youngsters out of the youth squad to sit on the subs' bench rather than have seven or eight senior players in the stand every Sunday. How do you think it feels, to train hard all week, to listen to a coach telling you he wants blood, sweat and tears and then have to sit in the stand? No thank you. You cannot do that to professional players. And then, on the other hand, the youth squad is the reserve of a club and is very important. Every day at Appiano Gentile I will include three or four youth players in the first team's work so they learn quicker and will then be ready if needed.

What is your aim in your first season?
Big clubs have big ambitions. But I repeat what I said before: my aim is to build a squad with superior will to win. That's why I will keep my foot on the accelerator from the first day of pre-season training to the last day of the season. I used to tell my players at Juventus, if we win this game, we will win the championship. That's how it goes. One step at a time. Look what happened last season to Inter: they wanted to win everything and they won nothing. Maybe they did not understand how to make steady little steps along the way.

Returning to Vieri. It's said you and he squabbled at Juventus.
That's true. But then, the same evening, we would sit down together for dinner. When you are together a lot it's natural that you have disagreements, but if opinions are honestly held, then you understand each other. You say what you have to say and then get on with the job. Vieri has said he wants to concentrate on football. We will turn over a new page. I will happily argue with anybody if it means I get the same results I got with Juventus!

Going back to Juve, what happened on that infamous February 12 after the Parma game?
Yes, a terrible evening. I told the players what everyone now knows: "If I'm the problem then I'll go." Then I added: "But I really didn't deserve to go out like this." You see, the previous Sunday we had lost at Cagliari even though we were camped in their penalty area for virtually the entire game. I just couldn't understand it. It was just like the game against Milan back in January when we were within a whisker of winning. It was the same against Parma. We scored first and then everything fell apart. It was baffling how things happened. I suddenly got the impression that it was just everyone waiting for me to quit. So I did. Of course, I had already decided I would leave but it was supposed to have been at the end of the season. I had started thinking about it in March 1998. That's when I went to [club owner] Gianni Agnelli and explained I wanted to quit a year before the end of my contract. I felt that I had gone as far as I could with Juventus and that would be the best solution for me and the players. Juventus had offered to extend my contract but I wanted new challenges. I had a lot of offers from abroad, including Real Madrid and Rangers, but Juve wanted me to see out my contract.

Wasn't it on the eve of the game against Fiorentina last December that you announced your decision?
Yes, it was. I got a lot of criticism. But what hurt me most was the suggestion that I announced it early because I wanted to take four or five Juve players with me. People wanted to suggest I was betraying the club, to create an impossible atmosphere in which to carry on working.

Why was your Juventus team so successful?
Because we gave more…even when we were playing teams technically better than us. We always had a team with great character. I don't think my announcing my departure influenced subsequent results. At Udinese, when Del Piero got injured, we had been top of the table. But that was the beginning of the end of everything. There were injuries to Del Piero, Inzaghi and so many other important players.

What should be the relationship between a coach and his players?
He should be their guide. Not an elder brother. Not a father. Not someone who loads you up for a journey… just a guide.

LIPPI: THE HONOURS

Juventus:
Italian League 1995, 1997, 1998; Italian Cup 1995; European Cup 1996 (runners-up 1997, 1998); European Supercup 1996; World Club Cup 1996

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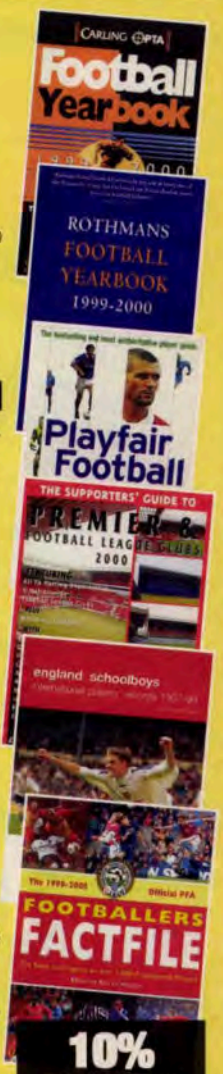

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The graduates

Israel have learnt their lessons well. Ori Lewis and Derek Fattal report

Running away with it...Israel thrashed Austria 5-0 in their June Euro 2000 qualifier

THE ISRAELI public have never held their national soccer team in higher esteem than they do today. And a good showing at the European Championship finals in 2000 will lift the players even further up the scale of appreciation.

When Shlomo Scharf took over as coach of Israel in 1992, he said that they would have to pay a high tuition fee for entering the European arena – and he was right. In his first match in charge, Scharf saw his men thrashed 5-2 by Austria in Vienna. Some six years and 33 matches on, Israel came full circle when they beat the Austrians 5-0 in Tel Aviv in June.

In the period since the country was accepted into the European fold, three important things have happened. The first is that Israeli club sides compete in the European cup competitions. The second is that the national team play regularly against continental opponents (the 5-2 loss in Vienna was Israel's first official fixture for three years, whereas now they play on a regular basis, about once a month).

And the third and possibly most significant change is that Israeli players have become a regular feature in the major European leagues.

Before Israel's politically-arranged 'transfer' into Europe, the country, ostracised by its Arab neighbours, had to travel vast distances to play in the Oceania group, where Australia were the only opponents who could be described as anything like formidable. Countries such as New Zealand, Fiji and Taiwan never presented the moderate Israeli side of the day with any real test.

All the above have been major contributions to the 'tuition fee', and from the relative successes and drastic improvement, the only conclusion to be drawn is that Israel have been diligent students.

Not since 1970, when Israel competed in the World Cup finals in Mexico, had the national team given any reason to believe that they were good enough to compete among soccer's elite. Now, with Euro 2000 just around the corner, Israel look ready to regain a place on a major stage.

Certainly it would be seen in Israel as a great success if the boys in blue and white were capable of reaching the Euro 2000 finals. But even if they do not, despite the obvious disappointment of missing out, this time there would be no doubt that it was a matter of bad luck rather than lack of ability. In any case, it would be another lesson for Scharf's players.

The coach, brash, direct and uncompromising, has built a squad that contains Israel's best players, almost without exception. He has moulded them in such a way that every one of his first-team choices has an adequate replacement. But, most importantly, he has managed to build enormous camaraderie among his men. Thus when the big stars such as Eyal Berkovic and Haim Revivo turn up to train or play, they get no preferential treatment.

As the vital September clash with Cyprus in Limassol approaches, Scharf knows that Berkovic and Revivo will be vital cogs in the machine, which will have to function smoothly if the right result (a win for Israel is the only acceptable outcome) can be achieved. But the players, despite their naturally large egos, are nevertheless humble enough, and know that the Israeli public will not forgive them if they do not perform to their best ability on the day. They have learned their lesson from 1996, when an over-confident Israel side were well beaten 2-0 by the Cypriots at the same venue.

Berkovic, who has just signed for Celtic from West Ham, was Israel's best player against Austria and received unparalleled accolades for his performance, scoring 10 in both mass-circulation Hebrew daily papers. Before then he had scored only four times in 53 matches.

There are plenty of others who are expected to give their all for the cause. Mercurial striker Alon Mizrahi of Nice is slight in build but a dangerous finisher; in midfield there certainly will be full commitment from captain Tal Banin of Italian Second Division side Brescia. With crunching tackles and a powerful shot, Banin leads by example, instilling confidence in his team-mates and urging them to give of their best. At the back, Amir Shelach, Alon Harazi and Ran Ben-Shimon provide a tried and trusted combination, while in goal young Nir Davidovitch has shown that he has enough talent and confidence to deliver a good performance when called upon.

When Scharf took the Israel job, the team were a long way down FIFA's world rankings. Now there is confidence and stability in the side and they are 22nd, having risen on the back of performances such as the 3-2 win over France in Paris in October 1993, the highlight of the period of rebuilding.

"The days of settling for an honourable loss are over," has become Scharf's new stock phrase. And now that Israel have graduated from the European school of football, the country looks ready to take a place among the rank and file of the continent's better sides.

SCHARF'S SQUAD

Name	Club	Born
Goalkeepers		
Nir Davidovitch	Maccabi Haifa	17/12/76
Eran Seinzinger	Maccabi Netanya	3/12/76
Defenders		
Najwan Graieb	Hapoel Haifa	30/1/74
Alon Harazi	Maccabi Haifa	13/2/71
Offer Talker	Hapoel Haifa	22/4/73
Ran Ben-Shimon	Hapoel Haifa	28/11/70
Amir Shelach	Beitar Jerusalem	11/7/70
Valid Badir	Hapoel Petah Tikva	12/3/74
Midfielders		
Yossi Abuksis	Beitar Jerusalem	10/9/70
Tal Banin	Brescia (Ita)	7/3/71
Eyal Berkovic	Celtic (Sco)	2/4/72
Alon Hazan	Watford (Eng)	14/9/67
Idan Tal	Merida (Spa)	13/9/75
Jan Telasnikov	Beitar Jerusalem	11/2/72
Forwards		
Haim Revivo	Celta Vigo (Spa)	22/2/72
Shai Holtzman	Rapid Wien (Aut)	1/1/74
Alon Mizrahi	Nice (Fra)	22/11/71
Nir Sivilia	Hapoel Haifa	26/5/75

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05.06.99 .....Italy-Wales 4-0
05.06.99 .....Denmark-Belarus.....1-0
09.06.99 .....Switzerland-Italy 0-0
09.06.99 .....Wales-Denmark 0-2
04.09.99 .....Belarus-Wales
04.09.99 .....Denmark-Switzerland
08.09.99 .....Switzerland-Belarus
08.09.99 .....Italy-Denmark
09.10.99 .....Wales-Switzerland
09.10.99 .....Belarus-Italy

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	6	4	2	0	11	2	14
Denmark	6	2	2	2	6	5	8
Switzerland	5	2	2	1	4	3	8
Wales	6	2	0	4	5	13	6
Belarus	5	0	2	3	3	6	2

Group 2

05.09.98 .....Georgia-Albania 1-0
06.09.98 .....Greece-Slovenia.....2-2
06.09.98 .....Norway-Latvia.....1-3
10.10.98 .....Slovenia-Norway.....1-2
10.10.98 .....Latvia-Georgia.....1-0
14.10.98 .....Norway-Albania 2-2
14.10.98 .....Greece-Georgia 3-0
14.10.98 .....Slovenia-Latvia 1-0
18.11.98 .....Albania-Greece 0-0
27.03.99 .....Greece-Norway 0-2
27.03.99 .....Georgia-Slovenia.....1-1
31.03.99 .....Slovenia-Albania .....Postp.
31.03.99 .....Latvia-Greece.....0-0
28.04.99 .....Latvia-Albania 0-0
28.04.99 .....Georgia-Norway 1-4
30.05.99 .....Norway-Georgia 1-0
05.06.99 .....Albania-Norway 1-2
05.06.99 .....Georgia-Greece 1-2
05.06.99 .....Latvia-Slovenia 1-2
09.06.99 .....Albania-Slovenia 0-1
09.06.99 .....Greece-Latvia.....1-2
18.08.99 .....Slovenia-Albania
04.09.99 .....Norway-Greece
04.09.99 .....Albania-Latvia
04.09.99 .....Slovenia-Georgia
08.09.99 .....Greece-Albania
08.09.99 .....Norway-Slovenia
08.09.99 .....Georgia-Latvia
09.10.99 .....Albania-Georgia
09.10.99 .....Slovenia-Greece
09.10.99 .....Latvia-Norway

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norway	7	5	1	1	14	8	16
Slovenia	6	3	2	1	8	6	11
Latvia	7	3	2	2	7	5	11
Greece	7	2	3	2	8	7	9
Georgia	7	1	1	5	4	12	4
Albania	6	0	3	3	3	6	3

Group 3

05.09.98 .....Finland-Moldova 3-2
05.09.98 .....Turkey-Northern Ireland.....3-0
10.10.98 .....Turkey-Germany 1-0
10.10.98 .....Northern Ireland-Finland.....1-0
14.10.98 .....Moldova-Germany.....1-3
14.10.98 .....Turkey-Finland.....1-3
18.11.98 .....Northern Ireland-Moldova 2-2
27.03.99 .....Northern Ireland-Germany 0-3
27.03.99 .....Turkey-Moldova 2-0
31.03.99 .....Germany-Finland 2-0
31.03.99 .....Moldova-Northern Ireland 0-0
04.06.99 .....Germany-Moldova.....6-1
05.06.99 .....Finland-Turkey.....2-4
09.06.99 .....Moldova-Finland 0-0
04.09.99 .....Finland-Germany
04.09.99 .....Northern Ireland-Turkey
08.09.99 .....Germany-Northern Ireland
08.09.99 .....Moldova-Turkey
09.10.99 .....Germany-Turkey
09.10.99 .....Finland-Northern Ireland

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Turkey	5	4	0	1	11	5	12
Germany	5	4	0	1	14	3	12
Finland	6	2	1	3	8	10	7
N Ireland	5	1	2	2	3	8	5
Moldova	7	0	3	4	6	16	3

Group 4

05.09.98 .....Armenia-Andorra 3-1
05.09.98 .....Ukraine-Russia.....3-2
05.09.98 .....Iceland-France.....1-1
10.10.98 .....Andorra-Ukraine.....0-2
10.10.98 .....Russia-France.....2-3
10.10.98 .....Armenia-Iceland.....0-0
14.10.98 .....Ukraine-Armenia.....2-0
14.10.98 .....France-Andorra.....2-0
14.10.98 .....Iceland-Russia 1-0
27.03.99 .....Andorra-Iceland 0-2
27.03.99 .....France-Ukraine 0-0
27.03.99 .....Armenia-Russia 0-3
31.03.99 .....Ukraine-Iceland.....1-1
31.03.99 .....Russia-Andorra 6-1
31.03.99 .....France-Armenia 2-0
05.06.99 .....Ukraine-Andorra.....4-0
05.06.99 .....France-Russia.....2-3
05.06.99 .....Iceland-Armenia.....2-0
09.06.99 .....Andorra-France 0-1
09.06.99 .....Russia-Iceland 1-0
09.06.99 .....Armenia-Ukraine.....0-0
04.09.99 .....Ukraine-France
04.09.99 .....Iceland-Andorra
04.09.99 .....Russia-Armenia
08.09.99 .....Andorra-Russia
08.09.99 .....Iceland-Ukraine
08.09.99 .....Armenia-France
09.10.99 .....France-Iceland
09.10.99 .....Russia-Ukraine
09.10.99 .....Andorra-Armenia

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ukraine	7	4	3	0	12	3	15
France	7	4	2	1	11	6	14
Russia	7	4	0	3	17	10	12
Iceland	7	3	3	1	7	3	12
Armenia	7	1	2	4	3	10	5
Andorra	7	0	0	7	2	20	0

Group 5

05.09.98 .....Sweden-England.....2-1
06.09.98 .....Bulgaria-Poland 0-3
10.10.98 .....Poland-Luxembourg.....3-0
10.10.98 .....England-Bulgaria 0-0
14.10.98 .....Bulgaria-Sweden 0-1
14.10.98 .....Luxembourg-England.....0-3
27.03.99 .....Sweden-Luxembourg.....2-0
27.03.99 .....England-Poland.....3-1
31.03.99 .....Luxembourg-Bulgaria 0-2
31.03.99 .....Poland-Sweden.....0-1
05.06.99 .....Poland-Bulgaria 2-0
05.06.99 .....England-Sweden.....0-0
09.06.99 .....Luxembourg-Poland.....2-3
09.06.99 .....Bulgaria-England 1-1
04.09.99 .....Sweden-Bulgaria
04.09.99 .....England-Luxembourg
08.09.99 .....Luxembourg-Sweden
08.09.99 .....Poland-England
09.10.99 .....Sweden-Poland
10.10.99 .....Bulgaria-Luxembourg

GROUP 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sweden	5	4	1	0	6	1	13
Poland	6	4	0	2	12	6	12
England	6	2	3	1	8	4	9
Bulgaria	6	1	2	3	3	7	5
Luxembourg	5	0	0	5	2	13	0

Group 6

05.09.98 .....Austria-Israel 1-1
05.09.98 .....Cyprus-Spain 3-2
10.10.98 .....Cyprus-Austria 0-3
10.10.98 .....San Marino-Israel 0-5
14.10.98 .....San Marino-Austria.....1-4
14.10.98 .....Israel-Spain.....1-2
18.11.98 .....San Marino-Cyprus 0-1
10.02.99 .....Cyprus-San Marino 4-0
27.03.99 .....Spain-Austria 9-0
28.03.99 .....Israel-Cyprus.....3-0
31.03.99 .....San Marino-Spain 0-6
28.04.99 .....Austria-San Marino.....7-0
05.06.99 .....Spain-San Marino 9-0
06.06.99 .....Israel-Austria 5-0
04.09.99 .....Austria-Spain
05.09.99 .....Cyprus-Israel
08.09.99 .....Israel-San Marino
08.09.99 .....Spain-Cyprus
09.10.99 .....Spain-Israel
10.10.99 .....Austria-Cyprus

GROUP 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	5	4	0	1	28	4	12
Israel	5	3	1	1	15	3	10
Austria	6	3	1	2	15	16	10
Cyprus	5	3	0	2	8	8	9
San Marino	7	0	0	7	1	36	0

Group 7

02.09.98 .....Romania-Liechtenstein 7-0
05.09.98 .....Slovakia-Azerbaijan 3-0
06.09.98 .....Hungary-Portugal.....0-1
10.10.98 .....Portugal-Romania 0-1
10.10.98 .....Liechtenstein-Slovakia.....0-4
10.10.98 .....Azerbaijan-Hungary 0-4
14.10.98 .....Hungary-Romania 1-1
14.10.98 .....Slovakia-Portugal.....0-3
14.10.98 .....Liechtenstein-Azerbaijan 2-1
26.03.99 .....Portugal-Azerbaijan 7-0
27.03.99 .....Romania-Slovakia 0-0
27.03.99 .....Hungary-Liechtenstein.....5-0
31.03.99 .....Slovakia-Hungary.....0-0
31.03.99 .....Liechtenstein-Portugal.....0-5
31.03.99 .....Azerbaijan-Romania.....0-1
05.06.99 .....Portugal-Slovakia.....1-0
05.06.99 .....Romania-Hungary 2-0
05.06.99 .....Azerbaijan-Liechtenstein 4-0
09.06.99 .....Hungary-Slovakia.....0-1
09.06.99 .....Portugal-Liechtenstein.....8-0
09.06.99 .....Romania-Azerbaijan.....4-0
03.09.99 .....Azerbaijan-Portugal
04.09.99 .....Slovakia-Romania
04.09.99 .....Liechtenstein-Hungary
08.09.99 .....Romania-Portugal
08.09.99 .....Slovakia-Liechtenstein
08.09.99 .....Hungary-Azerbaijan
09.10.99 .....Liechtenstein-Romania
09.10.99 .....Azerbaijan-Slovakia
10.10.99 .....Portugal-Hungary

GROUP 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	7	6	0	1	27	2	18
Romania	7	5	2	0	16	1	17
Slovakia	7	3	2	2	8	4	11
Hungary	7	2	2	3	11	7	8
Azerbaijan	7	1	0	6	5	21	3
Liechtenstein	7	1	0	6	2	34	3

Group 8

05.09.98 .....Rep Ireland-Croatia 2-0
06.09.98 .....Macedonia-Malta 4-0
10.10.98 .....Malta-Croatia 1-4
14.10.98 .....Rep Ireland-Malta 5-0
14.10.98 .....Croatia-Macedonia.....3-2
18.11.98 .....Malta-Macedonia 1-2
18.11.98 .....Yugoslavia-Rep Ireland 1-0
10.02.98 .....Malta-Yugoslavia 0-3
27.03.99 .....Macedonia-Rep Ireland .....Postp.
27.03.99 .....Yugoslavia-Croatia .....Postp.
31.03.99 .....Croatia-Malta.....Postp.
31.03.99 .....Yugoslavia-Macedonia .....Postp.
05.06.99 .....Macedonia-Croatia.....1-1
05.06.99 .....Rep Ireland-Yugoslavia.....Postp.
08.06.99 .....Yugoslavia-Malta 4-1
09.06.99 .....Rep Ireland-Macedonia.....1-0
18.08.99 .....Yugoslavia-Croatia
01.09.99 .....Rep Ireland-Yugoslavia
04.09.99 .....Croatia-Rep Ireland
04.09.99 .....Yugoslavia-Macedonia
08.09.99 .....Malta-Rep Ireland
08.09.99 .....Macedonia-Yugoslavia
10.10.99 .....Macedonia-Rep Ireland
10.10.99 .....Croatia-Yugoslavia
TBA.....Croatia-Malta

GROUP 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yugoslavia	3	3	0	0	8	1	9
Rep of Ireland	4	3	0	1	8	1	9
Croatia	4	2	1	1	8	6	7
Macedonia	5	2	1	2	9	6	7
Malta	6	0	0	6	3	22	0

Group 9

04.06.98 .....Estonia-Faroe Islands 5-0
19.08.98 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Faroe Is.....1-0
05.09.98 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina Estonia 1-1
05.09.98 .....Lithuania-Scotland.....0-0
06.09.98 .....Faroe Islands-Czech Republic.....0-1
10.10.98 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Czech Rep.....1-3
10.10.98 .....Lithuania-Faroe Islands 0-0
10.10.98 .....Scotland-Estonia.....3-2
14.10.98 .....Lithuania-Bosnia-Herzegovina.....4-2
14.10.98 .....Scotland-Faroe Islands 2-1
14.10.98 .....Czech Republic-Estonia 4-1
27.03.99 .....Czech Republic-Lithuania 2-0
27.03.99 .....Scotland-Bosnia-Herzegovina ....Postp.
31.03.99 .....Lithuania-Estonia 1-2
31.03.99 .....Scotland-Czech Republic 1-2
05.06.99 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Lithuania 2-0
05.06.99 .....Estonia-Czech Republic 0-2
05.06.99 .....Faroe Islands-Scotland 1-1
09.06.99 .....Estonia-Lithuania.....1-2
09.06.99 .....Faroe Islands-Bosnia-Herzegovina .2-2
09.06.99 .....Czech Republic-Scotland 3-2
04.09.99 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Scotland
04.09.99 .....Faroe Islands-Estonia
04.09.99 .....Lithuania-Czech Republic
08.09.99 .....Czech Republic-Bosnia-Herzegovina
08.09.99 .....Faroe Islands-Lithuania
08.09.99 .....Estonia-Scotland
05.10.99 .....Scotland-Bosnia-Herzegovina
09.10.99 .....Estonia-Bosnia-Herzegovina
09.10.99 .....Czech Republic-Faroe Islands
09.10.99 .....Scotland-Lithuania

GROUP 9

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CZECH REP*	7	7	0	0	17	5	21
Scotland	6	2	2	2	9	9	8
Bosnia-Herz.	6	2	2	2	9	10	8
Lithuania	7	2	2	3	7	9	8
Estonia	7	2	1	4	12	13	7
Faroe Islands	7	0	3	4	4	12	3

*Qualified for finals

● The nine group winners and the best second-placed side** qualify automatically for the finals, to be held in Holland and Belgium from June 10 to July 2, 2000. The other eight runners-up will be drawn to play in four two-leg play-offs, the winners of which will also qualify. These ties will be played on Nov 13/14 (1st leg) and Nov 17 (2nd leg).

**The best second-placed side will be the one who won most points from the games against the teams finishing first, third and fourth in their group. If points totals from these matches are equal, goal difference, then number of goals scored, from these same games will be used to separate the teams.

● When teams finish level on points in the qualifying groups, position will be determined by the points gained in the matches between the countries concerned. If they are still level, goal difference and then away goals from those head-to-head games will be used to separate them.

New responsibilities...coach Giovanni Trapattoni wants Rui Costa to direct operations in a deeper-lying role

Forward march

Kevin Connolly reports on Fiorentina's title-tilting squad

FIORENTINA have signed forwards Enrico Chiesa and Predrag Mijatovic to support Gabriel Batistuta, but the key to success next season may lie further back, in the form of a new role for Rui Costa...if he accepts it.

Optimism is surging through the Bormio training camp, where Fiorentina are preparing for their assault on the *scudetto*.

Last season, they had the championship in their grasp until 'Batigol' Batistuta was sidelined by a knee ligament injury just when the club needed him most.

As Czech defender Tomas Repka said, in something of an understatement: "When he didn't play, it was a problem for us."

Entry to the Champions League, after finishing third in Serie A, was some consolation, but, nevertheless, it is now 30 years since the *Viola* last won the Italian title. Now they have their sights set on it again, after assembling one of the strongest line-ups in their history.

On July 8, president Vittorio Cecchi Gori and coach Giovanni Trapattoni presented the new, improved squad to an expectant media.

Among its most recent recruits is former Juventus veteran Angelo Di Livio, who, at a cost of just £1.1million, could become the bargain of the campaign. Two more Italians have also been signed up – Alessandro Pierini for £3.8m from Udinese and Brescia's Daniele Adani for £2.5m. They arrived to play alongside Repka and Pasquale Padalino after Trapattoni failed to buy Velez Sarsfield defender.

However, the signings that grabbed the headlines were Chiesa and Mijatovic. Initially, Chiesa seemed happier to stay with Parma, but his coach, Alberto Malesani (formerly of Fiorentina), wanted to re-structure his attack. Faustino Asprilla was off-loaded to Palmeiras and Parma won the race for Serie A's leading scorer last season, Udinese's 22-goal Brazilian Marcio Amoroso. The club paid £22m for this privilege and also shelled out £6.5m for Marco Di Vaio from Salernitana.

Back at Fiorentina, the wait for Chiesa set Trapattoni thinking. Lack of cover for 'Batigol' had ruined the club's title charge last season. So, with Edmundo having returned to Brazil and Vasco da Gama, why not sign TWO forwards instead of one? Thus £5.5m was spent on Mijatovic, the scorer of Real Madrid's winner against Juventus in the 1998 Champions League Final, who agreed to a three-year contract.

Chiesa eventually arrived, too – though at twice the price of Mijatovic – signing a four-year contract that could last him through to the end of his career. "He's very quick, with an impressive scoring record," said Trapattoni, maybe dreaming of the 22 Serie A goals Chiesa netted for Sampdoria in 1995-96, before his move to Parma.

With Anselmo Robbiati joining Napoli – and back-up striker Carmine Esposito on his way to Sampdoria – Trapattoni snapped up yet another forward, 33-year-old Abel Balbo, also from Parma and still a lethal poacher.

Then, of course, there's Batistuta. He has been at Stadio Artemio Franchi since 1991. Such loyalty from overseas imports is rare anywhere, let alone in the cash-crazy world of *calcio*. In 1995-96 he equalled the legendary Swede Kurt Hamrin's record of 26 goals for Fiorentina in a Serie A season. With 144 League goals to Hamrin's 150, he is poised to break the Swede's all-time record.

No wonder Cecchi Gori is beaming. "I wouldn't be surprised if a legendary squad is in the making. I always said we'd get the best players for the best deals. I keep my promises," he said.

Now it's up to Trapattoni to make his stars perform. He's already confirmed that he'll play a 3-4-3 formation this season, with Batistuta, Chiesa and Mijatovic together. "They will have to work out a balance," he said, "but I expect them to see to that."

Trapattoni knows his strongest team. Repka, Padolini and Pierini or Adani in front of Francesco Toldo in goal; Batistuta the advanced striker, with Chiesa and Mijatovic playing off him; Di Livio and the German, Jorg Heinrich, raiding down the flanks; Sandro Cois, the central anchor. And then there's Rui Costa.

General manager Giancarlo Antognoni, who was a great midfield player himself, calls Rui Costa "incredible, awesome". Fiorentina fans have even created a website devoted to the deeds and sayings of the Portuguese star.

Suddenly, though, Rui Costa has ruffled feathers. He is a subtle strategist and cunning passer, who also likes bursting into the space created by Batistuta's runs. He can't do that with Chiesa and Mijatovic ahead of him, and has hinted, diplomatically, that he'd prefer not to play deep.

That, however, is what Trapattoni wants. "Rui Costa will be Rui Costa," said the coach, "but running around a bit less and directing operations a bit more. He's the right age for it now."

Then, almost contradicting himself, he added: "He's not changing his role. He's just going back to what he was doing under Malesani."

There is no doubt that the Portuguese international, now 27, can play the midfield general and create from a fixed position. That may be his destiny. It might even extend his already glittering career. But Trapattoni has to convince him first. That could be crucial to Batistuta, Chiesa and Mijatovic...and Fiorentina's title challenge.

Impressive record...Enrico Chiesa

Woman in a man's world

Carolina Morace is the first female professional soccer coach. Paddy Agnew reports

Unique team...Viterbese boss Carolina Morace (left) and her deputy, Betty Bavagnoli

IMAGINE the scene – the team have just dropped a home point by conceding a silly, 91st-minute equaliser. Promotion to Division Two has been badly compromised. The 'Guv' is understandably furious. But just when you thought the players would be read the riot act in the dressing-room, you find that the manager has to sit patiently and wait until they have dressed.

Yes, and for the good reason that this particular boss, 'Guv' or 'gaffer' is a woman: 35-year-old Carolina Morace, who made history this summer by becoming the world's first female professional soccer coach when appointed to lead Italian Serie C1 (Division 3) side Viterbese.

Inevitably, Morace's appointment did not pass unnoticed, especially as she took on a female deputy, Betty Bavagnoli. There were front-page headlines and comment pieces suggesting that soccer had just undergone a monumental change. This could well be so. But before we ring in the era of the woman coach, it is worth pointing out that Morace's appointment owes more to her unique combination of footballing experience, intelligence and knowledge than to new-found feminist fervour on the part of Viterbese's controversial owner, Luciano Gaucci.

There were, of course, those who reacted negatively. Lucio Matteucci, head of Viterbese's 'Brigata Etrusca' fan club, did not mince his words when commenting: "I am amazed by this choice. Carolina is certainly very capable but I don't see her as the right coach to get Viterbese into Division Two. It's hard enough for a man to handle a group of players like these...what can you expect a woman to be able to do?"

Viterbese striker Fabrizio Fermanelli was a deal more diplomatic but even his initial reaction struck a sceptical note: "She's more than welcome. However, you cannot pretend that, at least initially, we're not going to have problems."

Many of Morace's future colleagues and rivals were more circumspect. Antonio Sala, coach to Serie C club Castel di Sangro, suggested that he would wait and watch her team play before expressing an opinion.

Carlo Mazzone, doyen of Serie A coaches and currently with Perugia (also owned by Gaucci), was typically blunt: "I tell you one thing, I wouldn't want to be the first coach to be beaten by Carolina's Viterbese. You can just imagine the criticism that will be heaped on his head. Beaten by a woman!

"Seriously, though, people pretend to be surprised when a woman who has lived all her life in the world of football is given an important coaching job, yet those people think nothing of the fact that guys who have never played soccer professionally find themselves coaching a Serie A championship contender."

Mazzone's reference may well have been a jibe at, among others, Arrigo Sacchi, who rose from being a travelling salesman to leading Milan to a 1988 championship success without ever having played soccer as a professional.

Mazzone's comments touched on one truth – namely that Morace has lived and worked all her life in the world of football.

She was a First Division striker at 14, and is a living legend of Italian women's soccer. She won 12 League titles and 150 international caps in her highly successful career, her fame transcending the boundaries of the women's game.

Morace, articulate, intelligent and attractive with blonde, curly hair, just had to end up on television. This she duly did for Telemontecarlo, but in the role of expert analyst rather than glamorous presenter. TV viewers unfamiliar with Morace quickly realised that this was a woman who knew and understood a great deal more about soccer than the vast majority of males.

I met Morace five years ago when we were both invited to join state broadcaster RAI's studio discussion panel for Italy's opening game at the 1994 World Cup, that remarkable 1-0 defeat by the Republic of Ireland at Giants stadium in New York. Listening to her analyse the game was a revelation, because she showed not only a footballer's practical intelligence but also a detailed understanding of the individual players.

Morace is a qualified coach (by the end of July she will have a Category 2 licence) and a qualified lawyer who graduated with a law degree in 1996.

'The sceptics annoy me. I know the game and I'm a qualified coach' – Carolina Morace

And she has never been behind the door when it comes to arguing her case: "The thing that annoyed me most about the reaction to my appointment was probably the initial scepticism. It's annoying, not just because I have a long career as a player behind me but also because I am a qualified coach who, by the way, has been a TV analyst of Serie A soccer for the past 10 years."

Inevitably, too, there were those who accused club owner Gaucci of using her appointment to attract huge media attention to a club who normally pass by almost unnoticed.

However, Gaucci says: "I like taking a gamble. Some you win, some you lose. I didn't appoint Carolina because she is a woman but because she has been in the top flight of soccer for a long time. We want to give her a side capable of winning promotion to Serie B." Over to you, Carolina.

Money matters...Mario Basler's pay demands are threatening his future with Bayern

Bayern off to bad start

The champions' losing streak continues, writes Keir Radnedge

BAYERN MUNICH began the new season as they finished the last one, with a defeat.

The latest loss was not as embarrassing or irritating as the German Cup Final failure against Werder Bremen. But losing 1-0 to Fourth Division part-timers Weiden in a friendly was not the ideal way to begin a campaign in which the German champions intend making up for the huge disappointments of the final fortnight of last season. Then, the defeat by Manchester United in the Champions League Final in Barcelona was followed by that reverse against Werder.

Bayern wasted a host of chances before fellow Bavarian outfit Weiden snatched the winner one minute from time. Shades of Camp Nou yet again!

Then, as now, Bayern had the excuse that striker Giovane Elber was absent, still recovering from his knee ligament injury, though he expects to be fit in time to start the new Bundesliga season against Hamburg on August 14. "I can't wait," said Elber. "I can't live without football."

Coach Ottmar Hitzfeld was not as optimistic, saying: "I'm not sure he will be ready to start the season. He still has a long way to go and may need another few weeks before he is in shape for the Bundesliga."

Uncertainty continued over the future of midfielder Mario Basler, Bayern's goal-scorer and best player in Barcelona. He has refused to accept a new contract offer despite warning words from club vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge that "he is going the wrong way – we will not change our salary structure for any player".

Basler, 30, wants pay parity with midfielder Stefan Effenberg, who has been appointed club captain following the departure of veteran defender Thomas Helmer to Sunderland. Effenberg is thought to earn around £2million a year.

Rummenigge added: "Basler's conceptions and Bayern's are totally different at the moment. I can't understand him. When players do not accept their club's best offer – as happened with Ziege and Nerlinger – then the players must take the consequences."

Markus Babbel will still be with Bayern this season, although he is expected to join Liverpool next year, and Lothar Matthaus will start the season with Bayern, though he has agreed to join NY/NJ MetroStars. Whether 136-cap Matthaus will leave Bayern in mid-season or wait until after next year's European Championship finals has yet to be resolved.

New faces for the fans to look for include Paraguayan teenage sensation Roque Santa Cruz from Olimpia Asuncion and Brazilian midfielder Paulo Sergio, formerly with Roma.

In an impressive gesture of solidarity, the seven German clubs certain to play in Europe this season have agreed to give some of the money they will earn from television rights to the 11 other Bundesliga sides. The non-European clubs will receive around £500,000 each.

This voluntary arrangement fills the gap left when the formal TV share-out which previously existed was declared illegal by a civil court.

Bayern Munich and runners-up Bayer Leverkusen have qualified directly for the expanded Champions League group stage, while Hertha Berlin and Borussia Dortmund enter at the preliminary stage. Werder Bremen, Kaiserslautern and Wolfsburg contest the new-style UEFA Cup.

Bremen have appointed former German international striker Klaus Allofs as sport director, to work alongside coach Thomas Schaaf.

Allofs, now 42, played for Bremen for three years, winning the German Cup in 1991, the Cup-winners Cup in 1992 and the Bundesliga in 1993. He earned 78 caps and was a member of the squad who won the European title in 1980 and reached the World Cup Final in 1986.

National coach Erich Ribbeck raised a few eyebrows with the squad he named for the Confederations Cup in Mexico. It included a Second Division goalkeeper, Simon Jentzsch from Karlsruhe, and omitted star strikers Oliver Bierhoff and Ulf Kirsten.

Besides Jentzsch, there were three other uncapped players – keeper Robert Enke from Benfica, defender Frank Baumann from Bremen, and midfielder Ronald Maul from promoted Arminia Bielefeld.

Ribbeck, under pressure from club coaches worried about pre-season work, had promised not to take more than three players from any club, while national skipper Bierhoff had been excused duty to concentrate on Milan's preparations for the new season in Italy.

Squad: Enke (Benfica), Jentzsch (Karlsruhe), Lehmann (Borussia Dortmund); Baumann (Werder Bremen), Linke (Bayern Munich), Matthaus (Bayern Munich), Nowotny (Bayer Leverkusen), Worns (Borussia Dortmund); Ballack (Kaiserslautern), Heinrich (Fiorentina), Maul (Arminia Bielefeld), Ricken (Borussia Dortmund), Schneider (Bayer Leverkusen), Scholl (Bayern Munich), Wosz (Hertha Berlin); Bode (Werder Bremen), Heldt (Eintracht Frankfurt), Marschall (Kaiserslautern), Neuville (Bayer Leverkusen), Preetz (Hertha Berlin).

One to watch...Roque Santa Cruz

Dugarry blow as Blanc goes

In trouble...Christophe Dugarry

HOW to keep up with the flood of summer transfers or to deal with shocks such as the impugning of international centre-forward Christophe Dugarry, found 'guilty' of resorting to an anabolic steroid, with all the punishment – a long suspension – that such an offence entails?

It is a blow to him, and to Marseille, where he did well last season. The volatile manager, Rolland Courbis, will hardly be as philosophical about that situation as he was following the departure of veteran centre-back Laurent Blanc to Inter.

With the equivalent of an amiable shrug, Courbis remarked: "You can't stop a 34-year-old having a last challenge with Ronaldo, Vieri and co."

Blanc is beyond doubt an elegant and accomplished player and one presumes that the new manager of Inter, Marcello Lippi, wanted him for his experience. Not least because after so many years of sterling service to the Milanese club, 'Uncle' Giuseppe Bergomi, a teenage winner of the 1982 World Cup in Madrid, has at last been allowed to depart.

Italian football is no novelty to Blanc. He played successfully for Napoli before going to Barça.

Marseille, meanwhile, have been busy buying themselves, signing Ibrahima Bakayoko from Everton, where he never consistently found form.

That combative midfielder Olivier Dacourt also has left Everton to return to France. The Merseysiders netted upwards of £6million from the transfer to Lens, who in turn have sold their outstanding striker Tony Vairelles to Lyon.

There, he will pair up with Sonny Anderson, the lithe, swift Brazilian. Anderson joined Barcelona for a fortune from Monaco, and it seemed that an ambition was fulfilled. But he had the far-from-easy task of making up for the departure of Ronaldo, who went to Inter.

Anderson, you might say, has been round the houses. Now 28, he played in Brazil for Vasco da Gama of Rio, then for Guarani before moving to Europe and joining Servette of Geneva. That was in 1992, and after one season he arrived in France, at Marseille. Only one more season there and he was on his way again, to Monaco, and then Spain.

Injury took the shine off his spell in Catalonia. Barça coach Louis Van Gaal accused him of playing while failing to report an injury, thereby putting himself out for a considerable time.

"I leave Barcelona without regret or bitterness," said Anderson. "I don't consider my spell a failure. Quite simply, there are highs and lows in my career ...For my part, I want to remember only the best moments I've had with the Catalan club."

Lyon certainly have spent freely. Apart from Vairelles and Anderson, Laigle has arrived from Sampdoria, Hugues from Lorient, and Serge Blanc from Marseille, among others.

Elsewhere, Marco Simone has left Paris Saint-Germain for Monaco, whose other exciting signing is the highly-accomplished little attacker Marcelo Gallardo, from River Plate. These two should be capable of scoring plenty of goals.

So Simone moves on, a year after everybody had expected he would leave PSG, where he seemed so restless. The Parisians have made an important capture in persuading that clever playmaker Ali Benarbia to leave

Inter challenge...Laurent Blanc

Bordeaux, where he played such a large part in last season's championship success.

Bordeaux will hope that Ziani, formerly the life and soul of the Lens midfield, will show the same kind of form now that he is back in France after a season with La Coruna. Lens, for their part, have pocketed a record fee of £7million for a transfer between French clubs, selling Stephane Dalmat to Marseille *(see profile, right)*.

Andre Duclos

Pro-file Stephane Dalmat

Pricey but full of potential

NEVER say never. That's the moral of one of the biggest transfers of the French close season, the £7million move from Lens to Marseille of 20-year-old defensive midfielder Stephane Dalmat.

Only last spring Lens turned down a £10m bid for him from Milan, and at the time club president Gervais Martel made great play of describing Dalmat as "untouchable, not for sale at any price".

He added: "We have put a lot of money into this player and see him as a very important part of the club's future."

But by the end of the season, Martel's apparently iron-clad resolve was no more. Star attackers Tony Vairelles and Vladimir Smicer were sold, to Lyon and Liverpool respectively, key defender Frederic Dehu left for Barcelona, and Marseille were given the green light to take Dalmat.

Even though the fee agreed with OM was £3m down on the amount offered by Milan a few months earlier, there are still many in France who think that Marseille have paid too much for a youngster who was playing with the under-17s at Second Division Chateauroux less than two years ago, and, though a France Under-21 player, remains quite some distance from his first full cap.

Naturally, Marseille coach Rolland Courbis thinks differently: "We have signed the best young player in France, and that's something to sing about," he said. "We have pulled off a coup. Milan and many other Italian clubs wanted to take him to Serie A. Monaco, Paris Saint-Germain, Lyon and Bordeaux were chasing him too. They are good judges, but we got our man.

"We're talking about a youngster who can already do it all. He's athletic, strong, intelligent and technically assured. At a top club like OM, his game will improve in leaps and bounds. For example, I know he has the ability to score goals, but up to now he hasn't exploited it. He will at Marseille."

So Dalmat has his new coach firmly on his side, yet Marseille supporters are not nearly so enthusiastic. They have been accustomed over the years to a steady stream of big-name signings, and had been hoping to welcome the likes of Marcel Desailly, Roberto Baggio and Nicolas Anelka to Stade Velodrome this summer. Instead, they were presented with the potential of Dalmat, a trio of English Premier League cast-offs – wing-back Sebastian Perez (ex-Blackburn) and strikers Kaba Diawara (Arsenal) and Ibrahima Bakayoko (Everton) – plus a vast hole at the back left by the sale of sweeper Laurent Blanc to Inter.

The pressure certainly will be on the new recruits, but Dalmat claims that he can handle it. "I'm excited, not apprehensive, about playing for Marseille," he says. "Success is demanded at OM, but I'm confident I'll rise to the challenge."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Marseille
Country France
Born February 16, 1979, in Tours
Previous clubs Chateauroux, Lens
Honours French League Cup 1999 (Lens)

The waiting is over...winning the Copa del Rey brought Valencia their first domestic trophy for 20 years

Quantity, but not so much quality

Graham Turner on the clubs new to the top division

WHAT's the difference between one and two? There would be an interesting variety of responses if all *World Soccer* correspondents were asked to provide an answer.

Before you confirm your suspicions that we're all dumbos, incapable of using a calculator, it might be convenient to clarify that we're on about the difference in quality between first and second divisions. That became one of the major talking points when, at a time of the year that the most sensible parts of Europe were calling a spade a spade and a bucket a bucket, the Spaniards were still settling crucial issues under broiling summer sun.

On the last day of the season, Extremadura came back from two goals down to snatch a 2-2 home draw with Villarreal – a result that led to both teams contributing in equal parts to the communal weeping in the tunnel and that allowed Alaves, 2-1 winners against Real Sociedad in Vitoria, to leapfrog above them.

On the same day, Sevilla and Rayo Vallecano produced the results they needed to edge into the play-off positions in a savagely contested Second Division campaign. Neither team had performed consistently enough to shape up as serious challengers to table-toppers Malaga, though Sevilla had gained additional motivation from the incessant rumours that Manuel Ruiz de Lopera, president of city rivals Betis, had been offering cash incentives to Sevilla's opponents in a bid to keep the local derby off the fixture list for another year.

The draw for the relegation/promotion play-offs paired Sevilla with Villarreal and Rayo with Extremadura – both of them to play their away leg first. To everybody's amazement, Sevilla won 2-0, thanks to goals by Greek midfielder Vassilis Tsartas in the first minute of each half. Rayo then went to Almendralejo and won by an identical scoreline. They already were one up through Luis Cembranos when Extremadura had goalkeeper Ronny Gaspercic sent off in the 16th minute. Carlos Llorens added the second from the penalty spot.

Three days later, goals by Tiago and Cembranos gave Rayo another 2-0 win in Madrid and their fifth promotion to the top bracket. In Seville, where black market tickets had been sold for First Division prices, a header by Jose Maria Quevedo gave Sevilla a 1-0 win, had half the city celebrating, and left the other half, headed by Manuel Ruiz de Lopera, reaching for the Valium.

The fact that the two First Division clubs had been soundly beaten in all four play-off games, without managing a single goal, provided the proverbial food for thought. The rose-tinted view is that Second Division football is every bit as good as the game played by the so-called elite. The view through grey pebble-lens specs is that the bottom of the First, in terms of quality, is certainly no better than the top of the second.

Some argue that the sheer size of Spain's top division, 20 teams, allows a couple of 'small-town' teams to sneak in every summer and sneak out again a year later without, as they say in cricket circles, having troubled the scorers.

Indeed, one of the most salient features in the overview of the 1998-99 campaign was that, apart from Barcelona's and Malaga's clear wins at the top of each division, margins in every other department (Champions League, UEFA Cup, relegation, play-offs and even InterToto) were so remarkably slim that most issues went right to the wire.

The bottom (and top) line is that Salamanca, Tenerife, Extremadura and Villarreal have departed, allowing Malaga, Numancia, Rayo and Sevilla to sample life at the top. More fuel is added to the 'trash' theories by the fact that Atletico Madrid's reserve team finished second in the Second Division but, for obvious reasons, were not allowed to join the elite. In other words, the 'stiffs' finished only nine places below the mega-peseta all-star Atletico, who had another wretched season.

Malaga slipped out of the First Division in 1990 and then into bankruptcy and oblivion, but now reappear in the Top Twenty. After the demise of CD Malaga, a phoenix rose from the ashes in the form of Malaga CF, officially founded as a limited company in 1994 with the support of the local authorities and allowed to play in the magnificent Rosaleda stadium, previously condemned to lie fallow.

Malaga, starting in one of the regional groups of the Third Division, came through the play-offs to gain a place in Division 2B in 1995 and, after Fernando Puche had assumed the presidential chair just before the start of the 1997-98 term, came through more tense play-offs to earn a place in Division 2A a year ago.

After a shaky start that allowed Numancia to grab an early lead, the Malaga side, coached by former Atletico Madrid star Joaquin Peiro, put together an impressive campaign and clinched promotion with some weeks to spare. Peiro's squad is a blend of local talent, big-club cast-offs, such as the former Real Madrid midfielder Sandro, and a colourful but effective cohort of imports including Brazil-born Henrique Guedes da Silva, alias Catanha, top scorer in the division with 26 goals.

Reinforcements, such as Real Madrid central defender Fernando Sanz, already have arrived as Malaga bid to consolidate their newly-won status.

Their companions on the promotion bus are newcomers, too – and Numancia's debutant label does not depend on name changes. The club's home, Soria, is about 120 miles north-east of Madrid, and is Spain's second-smallest provincial capital, with a population of 33,000. The province measures some 6,250 square miles but the total population is only 90,000, and the conditions are so unfriendly that certain areas are emptier than an average portion of the Sahara.

Numancia, founded in 1945 and definitively constituted after a merger with Soria FC in 1988, had operated almost as a secret society in the numerous regional football divisions before attaining the dizzy heights of Division 2B in 1990. Then in 1995-96 Numancia finally made their presence felt by knocking Real Sociedad, Racing Santander and Sporting Gijon out of the Cup before getting their cup-uppance against Barcelona in the quarter-finals.

They reached Division 2A last season, having been rescued from penury by local builder Francisco Rubio. Even so, their remarkable promotion to the top division was achieved on an annual budget of £2million and an all-Spanish squad based on local talent and players from other clubs' reserve teams. It was also achieved despite suffering the trauma of a move from the old Los Pajaritos (Little Birds) stadium to a brand new ground, imaginatively baptised Los Pajaritos.

Numancia now embark on life at the top in a stadium that holds 7,500. The other three-quarters of Soria's population who will be unable to watch match action against Barcelona, Real Madrid & Co will have to rely on a little bird telling them...

Curiously, the stadium architect has walked off after laying the foundation stone, while the Numancia coach, Miguel Angel Lotina, has departed for Pamplona in a bid to work the same oracle for Osasuna. His place has been taken by the no-nonsense former Athletic Bilbao central defender Andoni Goikoetxea who, at the time of writing, is threatening – gulp – to buy foreign players.

Cup Final, Europe... and the sack

CLUBS in other countries were reporting back for pre-season training by the time Valencia won the Copa del Rey by trouncing Atletico Madrid in grand style in the Final, at the new Olympic stadium in Seville.

Claudio Lopez volleyed in a cross from Gaizka Mendieta, who scored a spectacular second by lifting the ball over Aguilera and Bejbl and beating Molina from close range. Nine minutes from time, Lopez scored his second, latching on to a clearance by keeper Santi Canizares.

Valencia were worthy winners, having eliminated both Barcelona and Real Madrid. Poor Atletico could only be thankful that the defeat had not been heavier.

President Jesus Gil then waded into the dressing-room and informed coach Radomir Antic that he would not need to be measured for next season's uniform – or words to that effect. Raddy, who had returned to save the club from relegation and got them, via the Cup, into Europe, was not amused. At the time of writing, lawyers are haggling about his pay-off.

Gil, in the meantime, had been barred from sharing the royal box with King Juan Carlos. Before you ask why, it should be explained that *World Soccer* does not contain enough pages to relate all the possible motives for his exclusion. Trying to cram a few into postcard space, we could start with alleged misappropriation of public funds, falsification of public and club accounts, election misdemeanours, town planning irregularities, connections with Italian mafia families, drug-runners, arms-dealers and un-impartial judges. Apart from that, pure as the driven snow.

Gil strenuously denies all accusations and, at Atletico, it seems to be business as usual. That means additional litigation with clubs such as Espanyol, Valencia and Benfica, who accuse Gil of trying to poach players under contract.

Ironically, when Antic emerged, well and truly poached, from the dressing-room, it was his rival in the Final, Claudio Ranieri, who was in pole position in the race to succeed him. Ranieri said goodbye to Valencia during the massive celebrations, which saw some 35,000 fans flocking to the city centre to herald their first domestic trophy for 20 years.

The musical chairs had started a few days earlier when Valencia, in their final League fixture, needed to beat Mallorca to get into the Champions League placings. Mallorca's coach, Hector Cuper, already had been recruited by Valencia as Ranieri's replacement. Valencia duly won the game 3-0, which guaranteed Cuper a place in the qualifying round of the Champions League, along with Mallorca, who finished in third place and, as usual, lost over half their team in the transfer market. Dani was sold for £10m to replace Sonny Anderson at Barcelona; Argentinian keeper Carlos Roa has announced his retirement to concentrate on spreading the word of God...but let's leave the transfer news for the next issue, because we still haven't finished with last season.

While Valencia were edging into fourth place by beating Mallorca, they received a helping hand from their future Cup Final rivals, Atletico. Antic took his team to Balaidos where Celta, unbeaten at home for 19 months, needed a win to stay in the Champions League positions. Celta seemed unable to relax and play their usually fluent football, lost 1-0, and ended the season disappointed to have been rewarded with just a UEFA Cup place.

The other major battle took place at Santiago Bernabeu stadium, where John Toshack's Real Madrid had to win to ensure Champions League entry. With a little help from a linesman, Real beat Deportivo 3-1, and Raul's two goals allowed him to overhaul Barça's Rivaldo 25-24 in the scoring charts. This made him the first Spanish player to top the list since Atletico Madrid's Manolo in 1991-92.

Real's collective sigh of relief was abruptly interrupted when civil war broke out a few days later. The fuse was lit when a vice-president, Juan Onieva, asked two fellow directors to 'raid' the safe and extract documents rumoured to constitute irrefutable evidence of dodgy ticket sales which, they suspected, have been lining certain pockets since time immemorial. Managing director Manuel Fernandez Trigo later admitted to 'legal re-sale of tickets since Santiago Bernabeu was president'. Definitions of 'legal re-sale' on a postcard please...

Eight directors called a board meeting which neither Onieva nor club president Lorenzo Sanz attended. The eight decided to demand Onieva's resignation and set in motion an electoral procedure aimed at ousting Sanz. The president's response was to support Onieva, appoint four new directors so that he could maintain a 9-8 majority in the boardroom, and ask the eight dissidents to leave. They ultimately did so, but only to initiate legal proceedings against Sanz.

The political upheaval coincided with one in the dressing-room. 'Pedja' Mijatovic and Davor Suker were the most notable departures and Sanz stuck out his neck on John Toshack's behalf by paying a club record £10m to Fenerbahce for Bosnian forward Elvir Baljic, who had caught Tosh's eye while he was in charge at Besiktas. However, having already recruited Cameroonian midfielder Geremi Ndjitap from Genclerbirligi and Colombian international Edwin Congo (the headline Real In For Congo raised fears that they had made a bid for the country), the club had eight non-EU foreigners. They are allowed to register six. Watch this space...

Graham Turner

Pro-file Carlos Gamarra

Paraguay's centre-back supreme strides into Spain

AMONG the high points of the Copa America were the performances of Paraguayan Carlos Gamarra in front of his home crowd. Sound in his positioning, quick to the ball and firm in the tackle, Gamarra gave an exhibition of centre-back play, and the crowd in the Defensores del Chaco stadium purred to his every touch.

They had full confidence that Gamarra would lead the team to victory, but it was not to be. His header from a corner was inches away from putting Paraguay 2-0 up and safe in their quarter-final against Uruguay. Instead, the Uruguayans went on to equalise and triumph in the penalty shoot-out.

In truth, the team never looked like the cohesive unit that Brazilian coach Paulo Cesar Carpegiani had taken to the World Cup a year before. Gamarra had expected that Paraguay would stick with Carpegiani's 3-5-2 system in the Copa America. "I'm sure we'll play with three centre backs," he said before the tournament. "That way, playing at home I'll have more opportunities to attack than I did in the World Cup, when the opposition pushed us back and we had to think about defending first and attacking later."

But Gamarra reckoned without the ego of new Paraguay coach Ever Almeida, who was determined to do things his way. The defensive unit that worked so well in France was disbanded, Almeida made a point of not selecting Pedro Sarabia, and imposed his 4-4-2 system on the reluctant players.

As a result there was insufficient cover at the back for Gamarra to charge forward and lend his support to the attack. He was trapped at the back when the team needed his leadership all over the field as nerves took a grip in the second half against Uruguay.

Years of international experience and recognition have transformed Gamarra from a shy young man into a dynamic and determined influence. After developing with Cerro Porteno, he had short spells in Argentina, Brazil and Portugal, with Independiente, Internacional and Benfica respectively. After arriving at the latter, many were surprised when he chose to go back to Brazil. "Benfica was a good experience for me," he says. "I enjoyed it there. But the club had many problems and the team wasn't so good. So I thought it was better to return to Brazil and spend some time there before re-opening the doors for a move back to Europe."

It proved a good decision. Gamarra was the key figure as Corinthians won last year's Brazilian championship. For a centre-back to be voted the best player in Brazil is surprising enough. For a foreign centre-back to get the vote is true recognition of excellence.

In South America, Gamarra is generally acclaimed as the world's best in his position. Now he has fresh titles to chase as he moves back to Europe with Atletico Madrid. After missing out on glory in the Copa America, Gamarra is doubly determined to complicate the lives of strikers in Spain.

Tim Vickery

Fact file

Club Atletico Madrid (Spa)
Country Paraguay
Born February 17, 1971
Previous clubs Cerro Porteno, Independiente (Arg), Internacional (Bra), Benfica (Por), Corinthians (Bra)
International debut July 1993, v Peru
International caps 56 (6 goals)
Honours Paraguayan championship (1992); Argentinian closing championship (1994), Brazilian championship (1998), Sao Paulo state championship (1999)

Spend, spend, save

While Liverpool and Chelsea splashed out on summer transfers, the rest of the market was remarkably quiet. Gavin Hamilton reports

Blackburn to the Bridge...Chris Sutton joined Chelsea for a club record £10million

THE ROW over Manchester United's withdrawal from the FA Cup overshadowed the comings and goings in the summer transfer market. Despite their overheated fixture schedule, treble-winners United appeared in no hurry to sign up new recruits, while Arsenal appeared to be waiting for Nicolas Anelka's protracted departure from Highbury before adding to their squad.

It was left to Liverpool to take the initiative in the transfer market. Manager Gerard Houllier splashed out £16million on an assorted collection of low-key signings, the most high-profile of which was the Czech forward Vladimir Smicer.

The moves represent a massive gamble by Houllier, who also signalled Paul Ince's departure from Anfield, with Jamie Redknapp assuming the captaincy. The spending spree – on Smicer, Dutch keeper Sander Westerveld, Finnish defender Sami Hyypia (*see profile, right*), Swiss centre-back Stephane Henchoz, German striker Erik Meijer and Guinean forward Titi Camara – surprised many.

However, the purchase of a £22m stake in Liverpool by media company Granada has given Houllier the funds for further purchases. German midfielder Dietmar Hamann was the next target after the move for Marc-Vivien Foe collapsed.

Chelsea matched Liverpool's spending with the signing of – shock, horror – an Englishman. Chris Sutton left relegated Blackburn for £10m, a Chelsea record. The impatience for success at Stamford Bridge was further underlined by Gianluca Vialli's other signings: French World Cup-winner Didier Deschamps, Dutch defender Mario Melchiot and experienced Danish defender Jes Hogh.

To make way for the new signings, Vialli was prepared to sanction the departures of Michael Duberry to Leeds, Eddie Newton to Birmingham and Andy Myers to Bradford City. All were products of the youth system developed by Glenn Hoddle, but are not wanted by Vialli as Chelsea search for a quick way to win the Premiership title.

Leeds' signing of Duberry was an extension of manager David O'Leary's policy of developing young talent, another example being Danny Mills' arrival from Charlton.

Elsewhere, there was remarkably little transfer activity, with Tottenham pulling out of deals for Sunderland striker Michael Bridges (failure to agree personal terms) and Israeli international Najwan Graieb (doubts over fitness).

SCOTLAND

Petrov deal on hold

WITH Kenny Dalglish and John Barnes now firmly established at the forefront of on-field matters at Celtic, fans enjoyed a summer of optimism as the new regime put together plans for regeneration.

Dalglish, in his perceived role as a procurer of talented signings for the club, made what appeared to be an immediate impact by luring highly-rated Bulgarian teenager Stilian Petrov from CSKA Sofia for £2.8million. However, stringent new criteria issued by the British government in relation to work permits for non-EU nationals has put the transfer on hold.

As efforts are made to cut through the red tape, it may be that Petrov will have to remain with CSKA until the matter has been resolved.

The short Parkhead career of another non-EU player, Australian striker Mark Viduka, has been swathed in controversy and Dalglish was eager to offer him to West Ham in an effort to land the prized signature of Israeli midfielder Eyal Berkovic. Talks broke down, however, when Hammers boss Harry Redknapp realised the full extent of Viduka's troubled history.

So Viduka looks destined to continue his spell at Celtic, and will now have the chance to play alongside Berkovic, who joined the club despite the earlier snags.

Dalglish also strengthened the goalkeeping position by buying Dmitri Kharine from Chelsea. The lack of cover for No 1 choice Jonathan Gould was evident last season when he was injured and replaced by 16-year-old Barry John Corr in a vital match against Hearts.

Champions Rangers, meanwhile, have been uncharacteristically quiet in terms of transfer activity, Dutch striker Michael Mols from Utrecht being the solitary acquisition, though Polish midfielder Dariusz Adamczuk was drafted in on a free from Dundee.

Rangers fans may yet be treated to the sight of Marco Negri in the first team once again. The moody Italian has been out of the picture at Ibrox for over a year following a difference of opinion with club management, and only recently returned to Rangers following a loan spell in his home country.

Coach Dick Advocaat, who at first appeared content to let Negri drift out of his thinking altogether, has dropped a few broad hints that the striker is welcome to fight for the right to pull on a first-team jersey.

Advocaat, never one to shirk from offering a controversial opinion, has suggested that Rangers should be exempt from the League Cup.

"It's a meaningless tournament, just an additional burden to teams like ourselves who are trying to concentrate on making headway in European competition," he said.

However, his words are likely to fall on deaf ears and the authorities are almost certain to compel Rangers to take part.

Alan Fairley

N.IRELAND

Devine shock for champions

JOHN DEVINE, Player of the Season and captain of League champions Glentoran, shocked supporters when he announced that he was leaving under the Bosman ruling and signing a three-year contract with Coleraine.

The central defender, now 30, has been at the Oval for over 13 years, but felt that the latest terms offered by the club were not good enough.

Forward Des Loughery, 32, from Ballymena United, also is joining Coleraine, while another departure from Glentoran is goalkeeper Wayne Russell, who has been replaced by Alan Gough from Dublin club Shelbourne.

Martin Murray has taken over at Crusaders following the shock resignation of Aaron Callaghan. Murray, the former assistant manager, has been a player and then coach with the club since July 1991.

One of his first acts was to buy striker Martin Reilly, from Republic of Ireland champions St Patrick's Athletic, ironically the new home of Callaghan, who has signed a playing contract there. But Murray has lost influential midfielder Liam Dunne, now at Portadown.

Newry Town earned themselves a little bit of glory in their first European tie. Goals by Robert Casey, making his debut after signing from Portadown, and 20-year-old substitute Adrian Larkin, who had been on the pitch only 60 seconds, earned a second-round place in the InterToto Cup at the expense of Hrvatski dragovoljac. The Croats had won the first leg at home 1-0.

Linfield look to have the best chance of Northern Ireland's clubs of progressing in Europe. They face Lokomotiv Tbilisi of Georgia in the UEFA Cup, while both Glentoran (Champions League) and Portadown (UEFA Cup) face Bulgarian opposition in Litex Lovech and CSKA Sofia respectively.

In the First Division, last season's runners-up, Ards, who were beaten by Cliftonville in the promotion/relegation play-off, have appointed boxing promoter and bookmaker Barney Eastwood to the board and are making an all-out effort to recruit a promotion-winning squad.

There will be two new First Division clubs this season, Armagh City and Institute of Londonderry.

Roy Kitson

WALES

The Maltese make it tough

BARRY TOWN, who have lost influential midfielder Mark Dempsey to Bohemians of Dublin, were held to a 0-0 draw at home to Valletta of Malta in the Champions League first qualifying round.

This result came after Aberystwyth went out in the first round of the InterToto Cup, also to Maltese opposition. Conceding two goals in the draw at home to Floriana in the first leg made the return a severe test, but Town at least gave a good account of themselves in Malta before losing 2-1.

Cwmbran Town have a money-spinning tie against Celtic in the UEFA Cup, but will have to stage the home leg at Ninian Park in Cardiff because their own ground is not up to standard.

Inter Cardiff, formerly Inter CableTel, venture into the unknown when they take on Slovenian side NK Gorica in the InterToto, with the away leg first.

In the build-up to next season, managers are busy strengthening their squads, with village club Total Network Solutions being adventurous by attempting to sign well-travelled former Welsh international Glyn Hodges.

Former Aberystwyth manager Meirion Appleton has taken over at Bangor City, and despite the recent off-the-field instability will be looking to regain some of the club's old glory.

The FAW completed a deal with the Welsh Rugby Union allowing them to use the Cardiff Millennium Stadium.

Mel Thomas

Permit problems...Stilian Petrov's move to Celtic has been delayed

Pro-file Sami Hyypia

Finnish stopper starting to live out his Liverpool dream

FINNISH defender Sami Hyypia's boyhood dream came true when he was transferred from Dutch club Willem II to Liverpool. "They've always been my favourite club," says the big stopper. "They were frequently on TV when I started to play, and watching stars like Dalglish, Rush and Barnes were sheer joy. Now I will be a Liverpool player, too. Unbelievable."

Experts are well aware of Hyypia's qualities, such as his strength and heading ability. Last season he also emerged as a leader, sometimes captaining unfashionable Willem II during their unexpected drive to the coming Champions League campaign.

"I was sad to leave Willem after perhaps the greatest season in their history," says Hyypia. "But joining Liverpool was an opportunity I could not afford to waste."

Hyypia began his top-class career in Finland with FC MyPa, where he joined forces, at different stages, with Jari Litmanen and current PSV Eindhoven winger Joonas Kolkka, who was also with him at Willem.

"Sami was a shy, quiet fellow," says Harri Kampman, his coach at MyPa. "At one stage I was undecided about whether to buy an experienced stopper or to make Hyypia the boss of my back four while still a teenager.

"I called Sami into my office and asked if he felt that he was ready for such a demanding task. He just nodded. And he has not looked back since."

Willem II bought Hyypia in January 1996, mainly as a replacement for Jaap Stam, now with Manchester United.

Hyypia says: "I owe a lot to Willem and to Co Adriaanse, the coach. He has had a big influence on my career."

In spite of his intimidating presence, Hyypia is really a gentle giant. "In the past, maybe I was a bit of a soft touch," he admits. "But Adriaanse has taught me to succeed. Every now and then a top-class stopper must skin the rabbit alive and eat it."

Hyypia has been the cornerstone of Finland's defence for the past three years, showing excellent form against strikers such as Oliver Bierhoff and Hakan Sukur. But he has one regret: in spite of his awesome aerial power, he has yet to score for Finland.

"I must have hit a post three or four times," he says. "At Under-21 level I scored regularly, at least eight or nine times. I still get into good heading positions at set-pieces, but somehow luck has not been on my side."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Liverpool (Eng)
Country Finland
Born October 7, 1973, in Porvoo
Previous clubs FC MyPa, Willem II (Hol)
International debut November 1992, v Tunisia
International caps 28
Honours Finnish Cup 1992, 1995

Old boys go home

Klaas-Jan Droppert on the rush to return

HOLLAND

AJAX and PSV, trying to close the gap behind champions Feyenoord, are hoping to turn back time and revive memories of the days when they won European trophies in the late 1980s.

Aron Winter (Internazionale), Frank Verlaat (Stuttgart) and Stanley Menzo (Lierse) have returned to Ajax, the club where they started their careers and where they won the Cup-winners Cup in 1987.

PSV have re-signed the full-backs who won the Champions Cup in 1988: coach Eric Gerets from Club Brugge and Danish international Jan Heintze from Bayer Leverkusen.

Ajax have been very active in the market. Their new director of transfers, Danny Blind, and coach Jan Wouters, who both played in that same European Cup Final, were the driving force behind the changes. The loss of the last survivors of the Champions League win in 1995 – Jari Litmanen (Barcelona) and Edwin Van der Sar (Juventus) – plus Sunday Oliseh (Juventus) and Mario Melchiot (Chelsea) meant they needed drastic measures.

Wouters, who took over from Morten Olsen halfway through last season, announced months ago that this year he will coach a squad he can call his own, made up entirely of players he wants. Now he is surrounded by familiar faces, the club also having signed his former Bayern Munich team-mate Brian Laudrup, who could have succeeded brother Michael two years ago but chose Chelsea instead. In addition, Martijn Reuser (Vitesse) and John O'Brien (Utrecht) came back from loan.

Earlier, Twente defender Jan Van Halst had been contracted to replace Blind, together with youngster John Nieuwenburg – a similar type of player to Wouters – from Sparta.

But the biggest surprise was the arrival of Nikos Machlas, especially since Vitesse chairman Karel Aalbers had said that Machlas would be sold only to a foreign club. In the end Aalbers revised his views, because Machlas was anxious to play in Amsterdam.

Vitesse filled the gap by signing striker Pierre Van Hooijdonk, no longer wanted by Nottingham Forest, but lost goalkeeper Sander Westerveld to Liverpool.

PSV also welcomed new players – goalkeeper Ivica Kralj (Porto), midfielder Eric Addo (Club Brugge), Swiss all-rounder Johann Vogel and Fortuna libero Mark Van Bommel.

RKC Waalwijk and Sparta Rotterdam managed to escape relegation by winning their play-off group with three Second Division clubs, RKC for the third consecutive time.

Sparta lost their first match at home to main rivals Groningen, but had a little help from neighbours Excelsior, who beat them 6-0. Groningen were furious and claimed the match was fixed, but both clubs denied this allegation.

With their last match being against Sparta, Groningen seemed to have the best hope of going up, but they wasted several good opportunities and lost. So Sparta remain one of four Dutch clubs (Ajax, Feyenoord and PSV are the others) never to have been relegated.

Back in Amsterdam...Aron Winter

SWITZERLAND

League restructuring may stop the rot

CHAMPIONS Servette, owned by French television station Canal Plus, are arguably the one financially stable club in Switzerland after a dramatic season redolent with revelations of debt-ridden clubs fighting for survival.

Dwindling spectator interest and support due to the best Swiss talent being lured to foreign clubs have resulted in falling gate receipts, the lifeblood of a club's finances.

Reformers are hoping that recommendations made by a study group to revitalise and restructure the antiquated League formula will not be ignored.

A central proposal is for the season to run from spring to autumn, scrapping the current qualification and championship stages, which are separated by the winter break. A reduction to eight or 10 teams, from 12, also is proposed.

The top-flight newcomers are Delemont and Yverdon, from the French-speaking Jura region.

Last season was traumatic for First Division coaches, with only two of the 12 who started it still with the same club.

The latest to get his marching orders was Lugano's Argentinian Enzo Trossero, dismissed on the eve of the new season by the club's Italian bosses in Milan.

The transfer situation is still in a state of flux with some loaned players uncertain of their futures as club owners continue to ponder over the best terms.

Moves abroad include Grasshopper international midfielder Johann Vogel to PSV Eindhoven, and Zurich's Nigerian goalkeeper, Ike Shorunmyu, to Besiktas.

Switzerland started the new season with high hopes of qualifying for the European Championship in 2000 through the play-offs for second-placed teams.

They are six points behind runaway leaders Italy, but have a game in hand over Denmark in a five-team group that includes Wales and Ukraine.

Ivar Von Rulach

Hopping off...Johann Vogel, now at PSV

REP IRELAND

Paying up with a smile

IT COULD have been worse! That was the general reaction to UEFA's £21,000 fine, imposed on the FAI for their failure to play the Euro 2000 qualifier against Yugoslavia at Lansdowne Road in June.

In the end the Irish government dug the association out of a hole by refusing to issue visas to the Yugoslavs. Now the FAI hope to play Yugoslavia at Lansdowne Road on September 1, which would mean three games in eight days. The Republic are due to play in Croatia on September 4 and in Malta four days later. September 1 is the only date available to the FAI at Lansdowne around that time, because the ground is required for the rugby World Cup in October.

That is one of the main reasons why the FAI are pushing ahead with their plans to build their own stadium at Citywest on the outskirts of Dublin.

"The response from the football fraternity and the corporate sector has been nothing short of amazing," said chief executive Bernard O'Byrne. "We have already sold 54 of the 76 corporate boxes and there has been a great interest in the premium seats, too."

Discussions to secure a long-term sponsor for the stadium are at an advanced stage, and provided there are no major planning objections the new arena should be ready by September 2001.

The FAI National League need to find a new sponsor. Harp Lager has ended its association, although the brewery will continue to sponsor the FAI Cup.

St Patrick's Athletic begin their campaign for a third title in a row at home to Derry City on August 15. Last season the League campaign was a two-club race, with Pat's beating Cork City in all three of their meetings. The first clash between them next season is at Turner's Cross on September 12.

Former Irish international Pat Byrne is the new manager of relegated Kilkenny City. Byrne takes over from Alfie Hale, retiring after being involved with football for over 40 years as player and manager. There is a new man, too, in charge of Sligo Rovers; Scot Jimmy McInally takes over from Nicky Reid, who managed to keep the club in the Premier Division last season.

Sean Creedon

AUSTRIA

Sturm win early prize

THERE was a very early start to the season, even by Eastern European standards, when Sturm Graz won the Supercup in June.

They beat the losing FA Cup finalists, Linz ASK, 6-5 on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

The first round of League games followed, with Sturm this time away to Linz and winning 2-0. Austria Wien also started with a 2-0 win in Graz, where GAK could make nothing of the Wagner-Mayrleb combination up front.

Satisfaction...Herbert Prohaska

The expensive Igor Pamic despatched a penalty to the heavens when the score was 0-0, and coach Klaus Augenthaler was beside himself. His opposite number, Herbert Prohaska, was more than satisfied, Wien having played the sort of soccer their fans expect.

Rapid lost to Tirol in Innsbruck for the first time in six seasons, a scissors kick by Gilewicz being the difference between the two. The big surprise of the opening day, however, was SV Ried's 2-1 win at newly promoted Bregenz.

Lustenau reached the third round of the InterToto Cup with a 4-2 aggregate win over Rudar Velenje.

It would be a tremendous feat if the modest provincial club, who were oscillating between Division Two and regional soccer only a few years ago, were to qualify for the UEFA Cup.

Bob Vaughan

LUXEMBOURG

Cardoni clinches Double

JEUNESSE D'ESCH beat Dudelange 3-0 in their final match of the season to take the championship by a four-point margin and clinch the Double.

Fittingly the last goal was scored by Manuel Cardoni, the Player of the Year.

Dudelange go into the UEFA Cup qualifying round along with losing Cup finalists Mondercange.

Petange and Spora were relegated.

Tim Brice

● In **LIECHTENSTEIN**, Vaduz just failed to gain promotion to the Swiss National League B section when losing 3-0 to Bellinzona in their final play-off match. The game drew a crowd of 1,600 – a record for a League game in the Principality.

Eschen-Mauren, the club from two villages, gained promotion to Liechtenstein's top division by beating Winkeln 5-4 in a two-leg play-off.

Vaduz won the FA Cup, beating Balzers 3-2 in the Final.

Graeme Crawford

Pro-file Dejan Savicevic

Rapid's Yugoslavian veteran aiming to bring back the good old days

Rapid Wien, Austrian League runners-up for the past two seasons, are counting on one last hurrah from veteran Yugoslav attacking virtuoso Dejan Savicevic to take them back to the domestic summit.

With Austrian international midfielders Marcus Purk and Christian Prosenik flying the Rapid nest for 1860 Munich this summer, it was clear to the club's board that an immediate injection of class was required in the creative department. So, on hearing a whisper that Savicevic might be tempted to call time on his second stint at Red Star Belgrade, contact was made in mid-June, and after a solid week of negotiations, the Montenegrin agreed to a one-year deal.

Rapid are, of course, taking a gamble on Savicevic. He will be 33 this autumn, and while he has never been the most durable of physical specimens, the past two years have proved particularly frustrating for him. He has been sidelined for long spells with knee trouble.

But, conversely, the Viennese club also know that if their new import can stay out of the treatment room, their chances of a first League title since 1996 will be substantially enhanced.

Should the player known as 'The Genius' during his five years at Milan be able to consistently showcase his mesmerising touch, dribbling skills and flair for goals, Rapid will be more than a match for the domestic competition provided by reigning champions Sturm Graz, Grazer AK, Linz ASK and Salzburg.

"It's not a soft option," says Savicevic. "I've joined this club to win trophies and particularly the League title. I've won championships with Red Star and Milan and aim to do the same with Rapid. I'm flattered that the directors and the coach here think I'm the man to help them become the top team in Austria. I believe I still have much to offer to both Rapid and Yugoslavia."

Released by Milan in the summer of 1998, Savicevic turned down approaches from Torino and Panathinaikos before returning to his old Red Star Belgrade stomping ground last season.

Back on the stage he graced in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Savicevic looked to have made a wise move. He was appointed club skipper, and he won a recall to the Yugoslav national team.

But ultimately his stated objective of "making Red Star as strong as we were when world and European champions in 1991" was always likely to be a pipedream. The Yugoslav civil war had seen to that, with Red Star deprived of big pay-days from the sale of stars to the West.

The harsh truth was that Red Star were not even a force in their own backyard, let alone Europe. Indeed, at the end of last season – brought to a premature halt because of NATO air strikes – his team stood in a sorry third place behind Partizan and Obilic. It had not turned out to be the scenario he had expected.

Hello, Vienna.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Rapid Wien (Aut)
Country Yugoslavia
Born September 15, 1966, in Titograd
Previous clubs Buducnost, Red Star, Milan, Red Star
International debut October 1986, v Turkey
Int'l caps 52 (20 gls)
Honours Yugoslav League 1990, 1991, 1992 (Red Star); Italian League 1993, 1994, 1996 (Milan); Champions Cup 1991 (Red Star), 1994 (Milan); European Supercup 1994

Athens inspection...Stan Collymore was talking over a move to Panathinaikos

GREECE

ENIC reduces AEK share

BRITISH multinational firm ENIC appears to be giving up its majority share of AEK Athens. Local press reports say ENIC has sold 40 per cent of its stake in the club to Nethold, a subsidiary of Netmed, a company largely controlled by Greek tycoon Spyros Latsis, who also owns Eurobank.

This will leave ENIC, who also have interests in Vicenza, Slavia Prague and Glasgow Rangers, with only a 38 per cent stake in AEK.

On the playing front, the club left for pre-season training in France under new coach Ljubisa Tumbakovic, the former Partizan Belgrade manager, who has signed a three-year contract.

Tumbakovic's first signing was Dragan Ciric from Barcelona, on a three-year contract. Ciric, a 25-year-old midfielder, was voted the best Yugoslav player in 1996 while playing for Partizan under his new coach.

AEK also signed sweeper Gordan Petric on a free transfer from Crystal Palace.

One veteran player off Tumbakovic's list for France was 34-year-old striker Daniel Batista, who sat out much of last season with injury. He has played seven seasons for AEK, scoring 66 goals in 166 games.

Panathinaikos held their first training session at the Peania complex with more than 5,000 fans on hand to greet the squad. New coach Yiannis Kyrastas told the players that they should be ready for "a lot of work" and asked fans to be patient.

Panathinaikos may sign controversial Aston Villa striker Stan Collymore, who visited Athens and had a two-hour talk with the club president, George Vardinoyiannis, who appeared unconcerned about the player's chequered history.

"Stan is one of the best personalities I have ever met – he has had some psychological problems, but they are now behind him," said Vardinoyiannis.

The national team have scheduled three friendlies for the rest of the year – against Mexico in Thessaloniki on August 16, Peru, again in Thessaloniki, two days later and in Andorra on December 15. A fourth is being sought against Paraguay or Bolivia for either August 11 or 21.

Lou Economopoulos

CYPRUS

Obiku returns to Anorthosis

STRIKER Mike Obiku has returned to Anorthosis after a seven-year absence, saying he wants to end his career with the club that gave him his first chance in Europe. Nigerian-born Obiku, now 31, has played in Holland, Spain and Japan since leaving Cyprus.

Anorthosis have lost Serbian Vesko Mihaijlovic, who has signed for Omonia, now under coach Dusan Galis, formerly of Slovan Bratislava, Spartak Trnava and, briefly, the Slovakian national team. Galis replaces Andreas Michailides, who has gone to Apoel.

Apollon have signed Cypriot international defender Costas Costa, who has just spent five months with Dutch club Utrecht.

Soulis Theodosiu

CROATIA

Ructions over the referees

THE STORM raging over the finish to the season, when Croatia Zagreb won the championship for the fourth time in a row, is still going on. Croatian FA officials denied any fixing of the results, and the series of strange refereeing decisions in favour of Croatia was explained as "an unfortunate combination of circumstances".

Avoiding the facts will not help Croatian football, already affected by the heavy burden of politics – everything is subordinate to state President Tudjman and his fanatical support for the Zagreb club.

Talks about removing leading League officials are now taking place, and Veselko Bebek, president of the Referees Association, has resigned.

Croatia Zagreb's new coach, Argentinian Osvaldo Ardiles, is predicting that they will become the first Croatian club to reach the quarter-finals of the Champions League since Hajduk Split made it in 1995.

Zdravko Reic

Looking ahead...Ossie Ardiles

ISRAEL

Champions cut down to size

LITTLE more than a month after winning a first League title, there was a grim return to reality for the players and fans of Hapoel Haifa: millionaire owner Robbie Shapira announced that he could no longer afford to bankroll the club.

Shapira, who took over five years ago when Hapoel were on the brink of relegation, said he could continue only if sweeping cuts were enacted.

The Haifa debacle followed the country's first major soccer drugs scandal, when the FA announced that Maccabi Tel Aviv midfielder Kfir Edri had failed a random test after a match against Hapoel Kfar-Saba.

Maccabi's fitness coach, Guy Azuri, said he had given Edri two pills before the match in good faith, believing that they were perfectly legal. He said he was shocked when IFA tests showed that they contained ephedrine, a substance banned by the IOC and other sports bodies.

Further inquiries established that Azuri had dispensed the tablets before other matches as well, at which point he handed in his resignation.

IFA's disciplinary panel will decide if action should be taken against the club.

Derek Fattal

MALTA

Buttigieg tangle

FLORIANA are involved in a complicated transfer dilemma concerning 35-year-old international defender John Buttigieg.

Champions Valletta announced that he had signed a three-year deal with them, but Floriana are insisting that they will be blocking the move under a local association regulation dealing with terms of fees and time limits for a transfer request.

Domenico Aquilina

ALBANIA

SK moves upset FK

THE northern town of Shkodra has been split by a row between its two clubs, FK Vllaznia and SK Shkodra.

FK, one of Albania's most successful clubs with eight League titles and five FA Cups, finished runners-up in both competitions last season. The players felt that their efforts had not been properly rewarded, but the directors either could not, or would not, meet their demands.

Newly-formed Second Division side SK's ambitious president, Gojko Jaku, promptly offered the FK players more acceptable terms, with the result that regular first-teamers Noga, Zmijani, Xhaysa, Kraja, Gruda and Osmani have switched to SK. Jaku has also engaged former national coach, Bejkush Birce, to lead a promotion push next season.

Gezim Nushi

NORWAY

Rosenborg stars are lured away

TWO of Rosenborg's top men have joined the exodus abroad. Runar Berg was signed by Venezia in early July, and Sigurd Rushfeldt has joined Benfica.

Berg, 28, is the son of former international Harald Berg, who played in Holland in the early 1970s, and is the brother of Orjan and Arild Berg, both playing for Bodo/Glimt.

Runar started at Bodo but tried his luck with Rosenborg as a promising 20-year-old. He returned north to play for Tromso and then Bodo again, but since 1997 he has been a vital part of Rosenborg's challenge for honours, and will be sorely missed.

Rushfeldt has been Rosenborg's top scorer for the past two seasons but has never concealed his desire to go abroad. Now Benfica have signed him for £2.7million.

Rosenborg coach Nils Arne Eggen is not happy about the fact that two of his key players are leaving when the club are just starting on the run-in for the championship and says: "I accept that Berg and Rushfeldt would want to leave but I do not respect them for it."

Sigurd Odegaard

DENMARK

Olsen tops the list

THE RACE is on to become the next coach of the Danish national side, after Bo Johansson announced that he would not be seeking an extension to his contract, due to expire in July 2000. Johansson, though, will go much sooner if Denmark fail to qualify for Euro 2000.

Morten Olsen, legendary former skipper of the Danish Dynamite side of the mid-1980s, is favourite to succeed Johansson, having gained huge coaching experience at Brondby, Koln and Ajax. But the problem for 50-year-old Olsen may be his tendency to make outspoken attacks on DBU administrators.

Johansson's current assistant, Flemming Serritslev, is acknowledged as a fine coach by the squad but may be seen by some influential people at the DBU as too much of a low-profile appointment.

Another name mentioned with increasing frequency is Roy Hodgson, who managed Switzerland to good effect.

Jim Holden

ICELAND

Triple blow for KR

ONLY goal difference separates KR and IBV in the title race, now approaching half way. But KR's hopes of winning the title for the first time in 31 years have suffered a severe blow with the loss of their entire strike force.

Andri Sigthorsson and Einar Thor Birgisson are out with long-term injuries, the former almost certainly for the rest of the season, while Bjorn Jakobsson has moved to Norwegian club Raufoss.

There was no fairytale ending in the Coca-Coca (FA) Cup for Sindri, a Second Division club from the eastern village of Hornafjordu, but they gave Double-holders IBV a battle after reaching the quarter-finals for the first time.

Rab Christie

Benfica bound...Sigurd Rushfeldt

SWEDEN

Almqvist pays price

IFK GOTHENBURG coach Reine Almqvist has resigned after only a year in charge. He had been brought in from Helsingborgs to renew the squad, but they have been playing without direction or confidence. There has been no genuine leader since goalkeeper Thomas Ravelli left.

Almqvist has been replaced by his assistant, Stefan Lundin.

Trelleborgs' 18-year-old goalkeeper Andreas Isaksson, third choice a few months ago, was given a chance in the first team and did so well that he has been signed by Juventus on a five-year contract.

Trelleborgs also sold striker Magnus Arvidsson to Hansa Rostock. The two deals brought in nearly £2million.

Pentti Hietanen

FINLAND

Haka equal a record

FC HAKA, the defending champions, equalled a Finnish record by completing their first 13 matches of the season without defeat. Russian forward Valery Popovitch has been the star for Keith Armstrong's team, scoring 12 times.

VPS Vaasa have parted company with coach Soren Oratz, who has been replaced by his deputy, Kimmo Lipponen.

Pentti Hietanen

Pro-file Rainer Rauffmann

Attack of the 77-goal German

SINCE moving to Cypriot football from the Bundesliga in the summer of 1997, Omonia Nicosia striker Rainer Rauffmann has specialised in causing havoc in opposition penalty areas.

Life under the Mediterranean sun has been very much to the liking of the former Eintracht Frankfurt and Arminia Bielefeld front man. With his aerial ability and wholehearted, devil-may-care style, Rauffmann has piled up 42 and 35 goals respectively in the past two seasons, comfortably finishing as Cyprus's leading finisher in both.

His feats of marksmanship for Omonia are legion, including eight goals in a 10-1 win over Anagennisis Dhernyia in February 1998 and five against APOP Paphos a few weeks later. But although no other player in Europe scored as many League goals as Rauffmann in 1997-98, and only FC Porto's Mario Jardel was on target more often last term, the German's efforts have received little attention across the continent.

Unfortunately for Rauffmann, the rules of the Golden Shoe, the prize given to the most prolific scorer in European club football, state that goals gleaned in a lower-ranking UEFA nation like Cyprus carry far less weight than those obtained in higher-profile championships.

Rauffmann, however, is not one to dwell on missing out on awards. "Of course, every striker lives and dies by the number of goals he scores," he says. "That's how you are judged, like it or not, and the fact that I've scored regularly in Cyprus says I've been a success. But for me, individual scoring awards come way behind the achievements of the team. I'm very pleased that my goals have helped Omonia qualify for the UEFA Cup two years running.

"On the other hand, it might have been so much better. We've twice come runners-up to Anorthosis in the League, and last season we lost the title only on goal difference. It's a little frustrating that all my goals did not make us No 1, but there's always next season. We have to go one better."

It's no wonder that 32-year-old Rauffmann is so keen for Omonia to claim the championship. After all, back home in Germany he did not win a bean. Most of his career was spent outside the Bundesliga and it was only after racking up 15 goals for Second Division Meppen in 1994-95 that he got his top-flight chance with Eintracht Frankfurt.

Rauffmann did not stay there long, though. He was on the score-sheet just four times in his first campaign for Eintracht and was promptly sold to Arminia Bielefeld, where he sank without trace.

The contrast is startling. Four Bundesliga goals in two seasons, 77 in a similar period with Omonia Nicosia. Not good enough for the Bundesliga but far too good for the Cypriot championship.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Omonia Nicosia (Cyp)
Country Germany
Born February 26, 1967, in Berlin
Previous clubs FC Amberg, Blau-Weiss 90 Berlin, SV Meppen, Eintracht Frankfurt, Arminia Bielefeld

Punished...Marius Lacatus has been handed a 10-match ban

ROMANIA

Lacatus may quit

The distinguished international has landed himself in hot water, writes Bob Vaughan

ONE of the country's most famous players, Marius Lacatus, is threatening to retire after being fined and banned for 10 matches. Lacatus, now the player-coach of Steaua Bucharest, was accused of spitting at Rapid assistant coach Nicolas Manea during the Romanian Cup Final.

This followed an incident in April when his tackle on FC Bacau's Vasile Ardeleanu left the latter with a double fracture of a leg.

Lacatus escaped punishment after Ardeleanu had intervened on his behalf, but the Cup Final incident intensified the feeling that he should suffer severe sanctions.

There was better news for one of Lacatus's contemporaries, Gheorghe Hagi, who has had a stadium named after him. Hagi began his professional career with FC Farul in Constantia, and the ground has now been named in his honour.

The midfielder, recently capped for the 116th time, is still winning medals, playing as he does for Turkish champions Galatasaray.

InterToto representatives Ceahlaul Piatra Neamt reached the second round of the InterToto Cup by beating Jedinstvo of Bosnia, but were then drawn against Juventus. So Dinamo and Steaua are likely to be Romania's only representatives in the UEFA Cup first round.

BULGARIA

Litex looking towards Europe

LITEX LOVECH, the provincial club who have now won the League twice in a row against considerable odds, have a good chance of overcoming the first hurdle on the route to the Champions League group stage.

They should be strong enough to account for Irish club Glentoran in the first qualifying round, and have the consolation of knowing that failure would still leave them in the UEFA Cup draw with Sofia clubs CSKA and Levski.

Hristo Stoichkov is back home, having severed his links with Kashiwa Reysol of Japan, but his playing days are not necessarily over. His performance in June against England in his final international showed he is still good enough to make the grade, certainly in domestic football.

Bob Vaughan

CZECH REPUBLIC

Summer soccer has its drawbacks

FOOTBALL in high summer, as in the InterToto Cup, is not to every club's liking. Hradec Kralove went out in the first round to Gomel of Belarus, while Boby Brno, although returning from Switzerland with a 0-0 draw, lost 4-2 at home to Basle.

FK Teplice set up a training camp in France, with a match against Auxerre, in advance of the draw for the third qualifying round of the Champions League.

Perhaps success in that will enable more Teplice players to catch national coach Jozef Chovanec's eye before the remaining Euro 2000 qualifiers. So far only star forward Pavel Verbir has done so.

Bob Vaughan

Eye-catching...Teplice's Pavel Verbir

SLOVAKIA

Tougher than tough in the new season

NO CLUB can afford to be complacent in the coming season, not with SEVEN due to be relegated as part of the long-needed reduction of the top division. This time next year only the top nine will be safe, with the Second Division champions being promoted to join them in a 10-club section.

Senec, newly promoted for the first time, are among those who seem sure to be struggling.

Inter, who just missed out on the title, agreed to sell midfielder Vladimir Gresko to Bayer Leverkusen for around £500,000. Gresko has played for the Under-21 team and the Germans may well have picked up a bargain. Some of the money has been spent on international forward Szilard Nemeth from FC Kosice, and Marian Lalik, a midfielder unable to command a place at Sparta.

With Slovan again in money trouble – their players have not been paid since April – Inter look favourites for the title. Kosice also are in debt and can no longer rely on being bailed out by the steelworks.

Bob Vaughan

HUNGARY

Euro bid already seems doomed

WHETHER Hungary should be in line for co-hosting a major European event is open to question. When the Slovaks travelled a few miles to Gyor for a Euro qualifier the fear that Ferencvaros 'fans' would cause trouble caused a massive security operation to be initiated.

There was a near full house, around 20,000, but there seemed to be more police, soldiers and stewards.

Slovak support was almost nil, but they took the points with a 1-0 win on a ground with very poor facilities – especially for the media. No programmes, no team-sheets, no press officers...how the Hungarian FA imagines this will help the joint bid with Austria for the proposed Danube Games in 2004 is difficult to understand.

Vasas progressed in the InterToto Cup with a 3-0 win over Neuchatel Xamax, paving the way for an easier task against Polonia Warsaw.

Bob Vaughan

RUSSIA

Gladiators in trouble

MOSCOW SPARTAK made an impressive start to the defence of their League crown, though violence marred the early

stages. The club quickly built up an 11-point lead as they brought several games forward in an effort to ease possible fixture congestion later, when they will be busy with European games.

However, though Spartak's good recent form may have put them top and increased support, they are also attracting trouble. A group known as Gladiators were involved in a mass brawl with the special security force OMON after a teenager allegedly was beaten with rubber truncheons.

The supporters tore up plastic seats and used them as weapons during the game against Saturn Ramenskoye, which was held up for 15 minutes.

Spartak coach Oleg Romantsev blamed OMON for the trouble, but the League disagreed and ordered the club to play their next home game behind closed doors.

Spartak forward Andrei Tikhonov has scored 11 League goals and is joint top scorer with Georgian import Georgi Demetradze of Alania Vladikavkaz.

Two big names have gone to Roma, setting records as the most expensive players in Russian history. Spartak's Dmitri Alenichev cost £5.3m and Lokomotiv's Sergei Gurenko £4m.

Victor Gusev

Top-priced...Roma's Dmitri Alenichev

POLAND

Ex-ref to head FA

FORMER international referee Michal Listkiewicz is the new chairman of the Polish FA (PZPN). In a ballot ordered by FIFA, he defeated the controversial incumbent, Marian Dziurowicz, by 99 votes to 57.

Zbigniew Boniek, the former Polish international who played for Juventus, Torino and Roma, withdrew at the last minute because he refused "to compete with somebody like Dziurowicz". Instead, he joined a new FA board as a vice-chairman responsible for marketing.

Dziurowicz, who wanted clubs to pay the federation large 'taxes' from transfer fees, controlled TV rights, had very bad relations with the national team coach, Janusz Wojcik, and his long-running clash with Poland's Sports Minister, Jacek Debski, was described as "a total war".

Because of that, FIFA threatened to ban the Polish team from international competition unless there was an election for a new chairman.

Listkiewicz was a secretary of the federation under Dziurowicz until last October, when he quit "because of the chairman's increasingly autocratic management". The new chairman is considered to be a reformer, though he said after his election win: "It is not a good idea to have a revolution. I am only one player in the team called PZPN. We must create a positive image because new sponsors do not want to invest their money in a sport full of scandals."

He agreed to give full autonomy to First Division clubs, who want to form their own league, and guaranteed them more money from broadcast rights.

Dariusz Kurowski

UKRAINE

League due to be downsized

THE SEASON got underway in mid-July with the prospect of the League being reduced to 14 teams from 16 at the end of it. The move to shrink the division has met with approval from officials at most top-flight clubs, the general feeling being that playing fewer games will increase competitiveness and quality.

Champions Kyiv Dynamo kicked off with a 1-1 draw away to Kryvbas, while their main rivals, Shakhtar and Karpaty, both won. The start of the campaign may be one of the most difficult for years for Dynamo, who have sold Andrii Shevchenko to Milan – for a Ukrainian record fee of £15.7million – and Oleh Luzhnyi to Arsenal. The club will also be without the injured Belarus international Valentin Bialkevich for three months, while Dmytro Mykhailenko has still not recovered from serious ligament damage.

Oleg Zadernovsky

LATVIA

Defeat improves Euro hopes

A 3-0 DEFEAT is not often greeted with enthusiasm, but that was the case after Latvia lost to Brazil in a friendly in Curitiba. The form showed by the team – after a long trip, and facing full-strength opposition – increased confidence for the Euro 2000 qualifiers.

Champions Skonto Riga are odds on to retain the League title, having gained a seven-point lead after the first 12 matches of the new season.

Metalurgs Liepaya, in second place, have an outstanding marksman, Victor Dobretsov, the scorer of 15 goals.

Valery Karpoushkin

Pro-file Alexander Panov

'Russian Papin' who made the French pay

HOW ironic that Alexander Panov, the Zenit St Petersburg front-runner known as the 'Russian Jean-Pierre Papin', should score twice in his nation's 3-2 Euro 2000 win in Paris in June.

The French should not have been surprised by the 23-year-old. Gallic scouts had informed national coach Roger Lemerre that the comparisons between the young Russian attacker and Papin were not gratuitous, that Panov and the ex-Marseille and France striker not only had the same short, stocky build, but also possessed the same tunnel vision for goals.

Yet the warnings fell on deaf ears. In only his fourth game for Russia, the busy and direct Panov helped himself to a brace at the Stade de France and the world champions tasted defeat for the first time in 19 outings.

A new Russian hero looks to have emerged. "Both for the team and for myself, the game with the French went as well as we could have hoped," said Panov. "The aim was to hit our opponents on the counter-attack, and though I was in theory our only forward, I was never short of support from the attacking midfielders in the team.

"We knew we couldn't afford to waste any of the chances that came our way and I was overjoyed to convert two of them in such an important match.

"This victory in France is just the spark we have been looking for. Now we are back in with a chance of going to the European finals."

Nor has Panov confined his exploits to the international arena. Just a week before his memorable night in Paris, he was the Man of the Match in the Russian Cup Final, scoring two goals in two minutes in the second half as Zenit ran out 3-1 winners against Moscow Dinamo.

"What you saw in the Final was typical Panov," said Zenit coach Anatoly Davidov. "He puts his heart and soul into every game and never stops hunting for goals. Like all good attackers, he has absolutely no fear of missing the target. He will go for goal from any distance or angle and has the ability to do so."

In response to rumours that Zenit have received several offers for him from western clubs, Panov insists he is quite happy to stay in St Petersburg. But surely it is only a matter of time before he heads for a major European league. Indeed, he has already spent time abroad, playing for Baokang Baochan of China in 1996 and rattling in 19 goals in only a dozen games.

"The football in China is really tough," says Panov. "There, I became stronger physically and mentally and returned to Russia a more complete player." The embarrassed world champions of France would not argue.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Zenit St Petersburg
Country Russia
Born April 3, 1976, in St Petersburg
Previous clubs Zenit St Petersburg, Baokang Baochan (Chn)
International debut November 1998, v Brazil
International caps 5 (2 goals)
Honours Russian Cup 1999

It's a first...the Palmeiras players begin to enjoy being the South American club champions

Palmeiras complete Brazil treble

Eric Weil on how the 1999 Libertadores Cup was won

PALMEIRAS became the third successive Brazilian winners of the Libertadores Cup – the South American club championship – but it was a first for the club whose full title is Sociedad Esportiva Palmeiras of Sao Paulo. They had been losing finalists in 1961 and 1968.

Palmeiras, who last year won the first edition of the Mercosur Cup – a kind of South American super league – and the Copa Brasil (a knock-out), have been arguably the best team in Brazil in recent years, but it is their current coach, Luis Felipe Scolari – a past winner of the Libertadores Cup with Brazil's Gremio – who has done a lot to turn them into title winners.

To help combat their heavy schedule – which went against union rules of not more than one match in 60 hours – the players were given a special diet of the type fed to NASA astronauts, according to PT coach Carlos Pacheco. Even so, Palmeiras did not have it easy in the Libertadores Cup, when sometimes they could not field their full team, and their record of seven wins, two draws and five defeats (goals 24-18) is not the kind usually achieved by Cup winners.

Palmeiras were founded on August 26, 1914, by Sao Paulo's Italian community, under the name of Palestra Italia, which today is the name of their stadium.

Stars such as Ademir Da Guia, Djalma Santos, Jose Altafini, Luis Pereira, Leivinha and Dudu have helped the club to plenty of local titles – four national championships, three Copa Brasils, four Rio-Sao Paulo tournaments and 24 Sao Paulo state titles – but no international title until last year's Mercosur Cup. In 1965, however, the club's complete team was chosen to play for Brazil against Uruguay, and won 3-0.

The worst moment came during the Second World War when the Brazilian government, on the side of the Allies, pressured the club to disband, as did other clubs of German, Italian or Japanese communities. A compromise was reached when an army general (Adalberto Mendez) became a fan of the club and used his influence with the government to let them continue on condition that the name was changed to the present one.

When Palmeiras and Argentina's River Plate were drawn together in this season's semi-finals, it was thought that whoever won that tie would win the Cup. River Plate won the first match 1-0 (to make it 29 Cup games unbeaten at home since 1993), but could not stand up against the might of Palmeiras in Sao Paulo and lost 3-0.

Deportivo Cali of Colombia earned a difficult 1-0 win in the first leg of the Final, with Victor Bonilla – tournament top scorer with six goals – netting after 42 minutes.

The exciting second leg left the aggregate at 2-2 after Palmeiras had won 2-1 in Sao Paulo, with penalties by Evair (Palmeiras) and Martin Zapata (Cali), followed by the winner from Oseas after 75 minutes.

With a shoot-out in prospect and in the face of intense pressure, Cali then went in for some time-wasting, especially after Mosquera was sent off (Evair was also dismissed, in the final minute, to even the numbers).

The penalty shoot-out was dramatic with Palmeiras missing the first kick, but then netting four against Cali's three. Scolari said it was good team work and the hand of God that gave Palmeiras the title.

Palmeiras beat the witch doctors, too. Their big Sao Paulo rivals, Corinthians, annoyed at being eliminated by Palmeiras in the quarter-finals, got witch doctors to work against them in the Final, but to no avail.

Palmeiras rarely play the beautiful soccer associated with the Brazilian game and are not the 'green scoring machine' of a short time ago. They have good attackers in Oseas (discovered at modest Atletico Paranaense), Paulo Nunes (brought from Gremio) and Zinho (brought back from Japan), and Alex and Cesar Sampaio are among the outstanding half-backs in Brazilian soccer.

In front of excellent goalkeeper Marcos there is a hard defence of Paraguayan international Francisco Arce, Junior, Junior Baiano and Cleber, who tend to play to the limit of the rules. But they have been found wanting in one-to-one situations and against very fast attacks.

There was no drug-testing in the tournament until the quarter-finals, which brought some protests and more suspicion. The reason CONMEBOL gives is that only three South American countries – Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay – have the laboratories to handle the tests.

Not for the first time, visiting teams frequently had a rough time. River Plate, travelling to Colombia for two first-round games, had to wait four and a half hours for a chartered domestic flight that takes just 45 minutes.

Then they were kept awake all night by Colombian fans, and their changing room at the stadium had no hot water. This goes beyond gamesmanship.

● The 40 editions of the Libertadores Cup have been won by clubs from Argentina 17 times, Brazil (11), Uruguay (8), Paraguay (2), Chile and Colombia (1).

Leading club winners: 7 – Independiente (Arg); 5 – Penarol (Uru); 3 – Nacional (Uru), Estudiantes (Arg).

ARGENTINA

Double joy for Boca

BOCA JUNIORS duly finished the National A Division closing championship with a seven-point lead over River Plate, to become the third club to win both the opening and closing championships in the same season since the system started in 1990.

Velez Sarsfield were the first club to do it, in 1995-96, and River Plate the second, in the following season.

With Boca having won both titles, River Plate beat opening championship runners-up Gimnasia y Esgrima de La Plata 3-2 in a play-off to decide who would take the second Libertadores Cup place next year.

This was the farewell game for the longest-serving coach in the League – Timoteo Griguol, who coached Gimnasia for five years and is joining Spain's Betis.

Boca finished with a 13-5-1 record (goals 35-11). Independiente's Jose Luis Calderon was top scorer with 17 goals.

Boca's main reason for winning was that they hung on to their leading players, such as striker Martin Palermo and midfield link man Juan Riquelme. Young world-class defender Walter Samuel's move to Roma does not take effect until the middle of next year.

The revelation of this closing championship, and the closest to Diego Maradona in recent years, was River Plate's 17-year-old Javier Saviola.

Huracan, once considered a 'big six' team, and Platense were relegated.

IN URUGUAY... Nacional lost their last match 3-1 to River Plate and finished only one point ahead of Defensor Sporting in the opening championship

Boca star...Juan Riquelme

table. Nacional striker, Gabriel Alvez was top scorer with 14 goals.

IN PERU... Universitario won the opening championship a week before the end and finished the tournament four points ahead of Alianza Lima.

IN COLOMBIA... America Cali won the opening championship by two points from Atletico Nacional. Independiente keeper Rene Higuita scored his 49th goal, from a free-kick, in the game with Nacional.

Eric Weil

Fouls cause Phil's men to fail

Riot act...the Paulista Final between Palmeiras and Corinthians descended into chaos

BRAZIL

THE PAULISTA championship ended in bizarre fashion when the second leg of the Corinthians-Palmeiras Final was abandoned in the 76th minute following a massive brawl between the players. The shocking scenes, for which Palmeiras have to take the bulk of the blame, came five days after Big Phil Scolari's team achieved their long-held dream of winning the Libertadores Cup.

The fight began when Corinthians' goalscorer Edilson, whose team were enjoying a three-goal aggregate lead, collected a pass in midfield and nonchalantly began juggling with the ball, at one stage bouncing it on his head and rolling it down his back.

It was a marvellous piece of skill but the sheer cheek of it, in the middle of a passionate derby, incensed the Palmeiras players, who saw it as mickey-taking. First, left-back Junior crashed into Edilson, then midfielder Zinho and forward Paulo Nunes chased after him and began kicking him from behind. Edilson managed to kick back at Paulo Nunes, before rushing to the safety of the dressing-room; Palmeiras defender Roque Junior also ran after Edilson but was intercepted and knocked to the ground by a Corinthians official in what, in American football, would have been considered a first-class tackle.

After that all hell broke loose and nearly all the players took part. They were joined by officials and substitutes from the benches, truncheon-wielding riot police trying to separate the warring factions, and hordes of fearless radio and television reporters, who attempted to interview the protagonists as they fought.

This lasted for around 10 minutes, at the end of which referee Paulo Cesar Oliveira simply decided to end the match due to a "generalised fight". The 2-2 scoreline stood as the result, giving Corinthians a 5-2 aggregate win.

The Corinthians players did a lap of honour before the slanging match began.

"Paulo Nunes likes to celebrate goals by putting on silly masks but when I have a little joke, he can't take it," said Edilson.

"They're annoyed with us because we won the Libertadores and all they've got is this little state championship," scoffed Palmeiras hard man Galeano.

The mud-slinging continued on the *Super Tecnico* television programme later. Palmeiras manager Luis Felipe Scolari, or Big Phil as most prefer to call him, said he would never want Edilson in his team. Edilson phoned the programme and, from the safety of his home, retorted: "I would never want to be in a team trained by Big Phil. His idea of using lots of physical strength does not appeal to me."

Next day, Edilson was axed from Brazil's Copa America squad by coach Wanderley Luxemburgo, who claimed the player was irresponsible. "I didn't like his attitude," said Luxemburgo.

Poor Edilson. He took nearly all of the blame for the awful if somewhat comical scenes, but barely a word of criticism was aimed towards the vicious attack perpetrated by hot-tempered Paulo Nunes, Junior and Zinho, nor towards Palmeiras defender Cleber, sent off in the 21st minute for a truly appalling tackle.

Edilson, after all, did not break any rules. His offence was to exhibit, albeit rather cheekily, the skills for which Brazilian football has won admirers around the world and which Globo TV's xenophobic commentators applaud when performed by national team players against foreign sides.

In Brazil, hilariously, Edilson was considered to have broken etiquette. And yet, the idea that any sort of 'etiquette' exists in Brazilian football is absolutely ridiculous. This is a country, remember, where diving to win penalties is seen as an acceptable tactic and where directors run on to the pitch to protest refereeing decisions safe ih the knowledge that they will not by punished for their behaviour.

Brazil is perhaps the only place in the world that recognises the concept of 'the normal foul' – breaking up a vaguely threatening opposition move with a slight shirt pull, a sneaky little trip or push in the back. Referees do not consider them worthy of yellow cards and consequently most Brazilian domestic matches are punctuated by 60 or 70 of them. Big Phil is one of those managers who publicly admonishes his players for NOT committing 'normal fouls'.

As former Brazil international Tostao said: "Brazilian football is the most violent in the world. The average of fouls, around 50 per game, is the highest and the fouls are the most violent."

Brazilian machismo, rather than etiquette, is the real reason Palmeiras got so upset. Even though the likes of Paulo Nunes generally behave like overgrown schoolchildren, they saw Edilson's cheek as an attempt to make them look stupid and, thus, as an affront to their manhood. "He didn't behave like a man," whinged Junior. "Yes, I tried to injure him."

The story went back to May, when Palmeiras knocked Corinthians out of the Libertadores Cup in the quarter-finals and then began gloating at their rivals' expense. The first leg of the Paulista Final ended with two Palmeiras players sent off and mutual allegations of foul play. Edilson claimed he would support Cali in the Libertadores Final.

It was an ignominious end to Palmeiras' attempt at their own treble of Copa Brasil, Libertadores Cup and Paulista. But the main objective, to win the Libertadores Cup, was achieved.

After a difficult start, when his Sergeant Major approach antagonised the media and Palmeiras supporters, Big Phil has proved himself one of Brazil's top managers. He is, by a long way, the straightest talker.

He proved this immediately after Palmeiras had beaten Cali in the Final. Asked what he thought of the time-wasting by the otherwise impressive Colombians, who clearly wanted to hold out for penalties after having a player sent off in the 78th minute, he replied: "I would probably have told my players to do the same thing in their situation."

Brian Homewood

● The Copa Brasil, which carries a place in next year's Libertadores Cup, was won by a minor team, Juventude from Caxias do Sul, who play in the Sao Paulo League. Juventude won their home leg of the Final 2-1 and held Rio's Botafogo to a 0-0 draw in front of 110,000 at Maracana.

Flamengo took their 15th Rio (Carioca) League title by winning the play-off between the top side from the two rounds. After a 1-1 draw in the first leg, Flamengo beat Vasco da Gama 1-0 in the second.

Vasco, with a better overall record during the season, needed only a draw to retain the title, but Rodrigo scored the vital goal 15 minutes from the end.

Eric Weil

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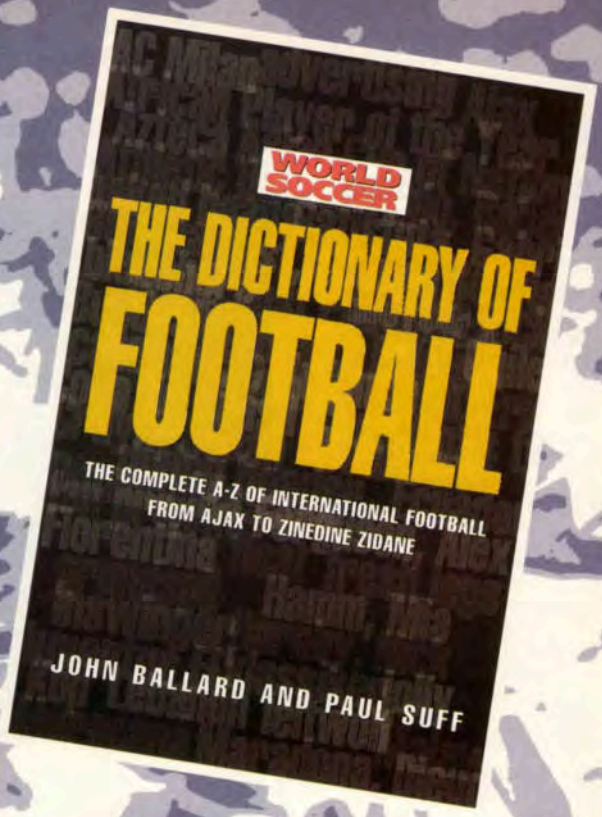

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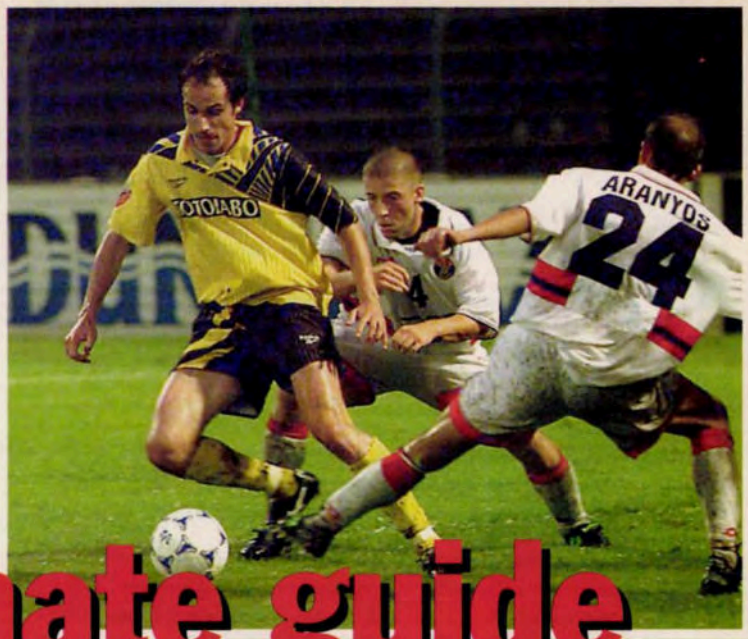

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PLUS

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SEPTEMBER ISSUE ON SALE AUGUST 20

Crossword

Win a top-quality Mitre football

Mitre has kindly donated a top-quality football as first prize for this month's crossword. The first correct entry selected at random after August 27 will win the ball. Five runners-up will win a *World Soccer* polo shirt.

SEND YOUR ENTRY TO: AUGUST CROSSWORD, *World Soccer*, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS.

CLUES ACROSS

1 ....The African confederation's original choice to host the 2000 Nations Cup finals (8)
6 ....Dutch centre-back in Manchester United's treble-winning team (4)
7 .....Romanian defender sold by Atletico to Rangers in 1998 (6)
9 .....Ex-Newcastle manager currently serving as England's coach (6)
10 ...Former England midfielder briefly a coach at Sampdoria last season (5)
11 ...Czech coach who recently parted company with Maccabi Haifa (5)
14 ...Restless Australian forward eventually recruited by Celtic from Croatia Zagreb (6)
16 ...PSV forward transferred to Oviedo last term (6)
17 ...African nation whose Cup holders are Djoliba (4)
18 ...Uruguayan team – three times World Club champions (8)

CLUES DOWN

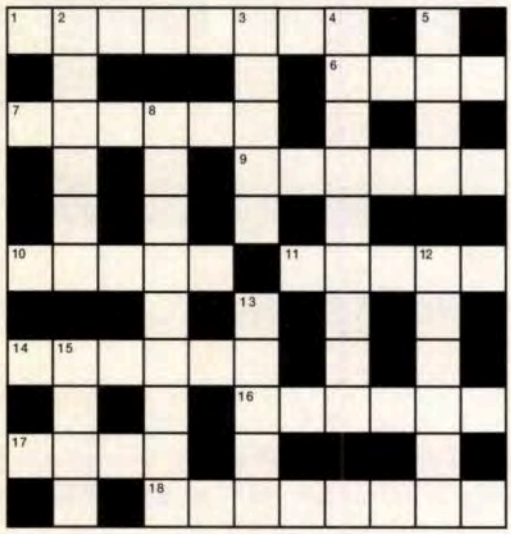
2 .....National side coached by Shlomo Scharf (6)
3 .....Austrian who refereed the 1999 European Cup-winners Cup Final (5)
4 .....Iranian representatives defeated by Jubilo in the 1999 Asian Champions Cup Final (9)
5 .....Cipro's replacement as Tirol coach (4)
8 .....Kyiv Dynamo and Ukraine left-back (9)
12 ...Nigerian elected Africa's Footballer of the Year in 1997 (6)
13 ...Croatian defender in Germany with Bayer Leverkusen (5)
15 ...Bordeaux forward, brother of Spanish star Alfonso (4)

SUMMER SOLUTION

Across: 2 Becanovic 6 Sergi 7 Dieng 9 Everse 10 Vigo 12 Cocu 14 Wojcik 17 Cipro 18 Acuna 19 Marcelino.
Down: 1 Gaspercic 2 Birce 3 Chiesa 4 Nadj 5 Vieri 8 Gronkjaer 11 Solari 13 Cuper 15 Couto 16 Cole.

JULY WINNERS

1st prize: James Ankers, Chester.
Runners-up: Neil Davison, Dunfermline; Robert Timson, Norwich; Sacha Kumaria, Hong Kong; Luca Pastormerlo, Pavia, Italy; Anthony Raineri, Sydney.



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United sell-out in Shanghai

CHINA

THE friendly match between Shanghai Shenua and Manchester United is a money-spinner for both clubs.

United are being paid some £330,000, plus travel and hotel expenses, for this one-off exercise, but there has been such a rush of sponsorship deals that the home club are likely to clear about £1.3m AFTER paying for Beckham and Co.

Ticket income and the perimeter advertising rights are both expected to reach £800,000. The match, on July 21, has been a major talking point in China, and every ticket had gone early in June.

Shanghai, now coached by Brazilian Sebastiao Lazaroni, were top of the Chinese League when play was suspended for 45 days in order to accommodate the FA Cup competition and the Olympic qualifying tournament.

Dalian, unbeaten at home for 57 games before this season, are having a terrible time.

They did not win until their 12th match, and by then coach Xy Genbao had been sacked and replaced by Li Yinfa, who was very successful with Liaoning in the 1980s but had been dismissed from his post at Second Division Hongyan after they had taken only two points from their first seven games.

Dalian undoubtedly miss Hao Haidong, international striker and Player of the Year in the past two seasons. He was suspended for 12 months after spitting in a referee's face.

Fan Zhiyi and Sun Jihai, who joined Crystal Palace last September, are currently on tour in China with their club, and will sign for Dalian after the trip ends.

They will cost a combined fee of £800,000 – 80 per cent of what they cost Palace.

Zheng Ming

Back home...Fan Zhiyi and Sun Jihai

OCEANIA

Glory for Guria

LAHI GURIA of Lae broke the five-year stranglehold of Port Moresby clubs on the **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** national championship when defeating Rapatona 2-1 in this season's Final.

Guria, playing at home, took the lead when the Rapatona keeper palmed Leo Bule's inswinging corner into his own net.

There was an even more bizarre equaliser when Michael Paulus, believing a team-mate had been fouled, picked up the ball in his own goalmouth. But the referee awarded a penalty against the Guria man for handling.

Alwin Sio scored the winner for Guria with a shot from just inside the box.

AUSTRALIA: The Socceroos gave an impressive performance in the 3-2 victory over a World XI before a crowd of 88,101 in Sydney's Olympic Stadium.

NEW ZEALAND: In the top tie of the Chatham Cup's sixth round, Central United were outgunned by Waitakere City and were lucky to lose by only 2-1.

Paul Moon

ASIAN ROUND-UP

Bashar set to break record

A RECORD transfer fee for the Gulf region, £1.35million, is rumoured to be in the offing.

The player concerned is 22-year-old Bashar Abdullah, a striker with **KUWAIT** club Al-Salmiya. He is being linked with an unnamed team in the United Arab Emirates.

Brazilian Carlos Alberto Parreira is hot favourite to take charge of the Kuwaiti national team. The place has been vacant since March, when the Czech Milan Macala resigned and joined neighbouring Saudi Arabia.

In domestic competition, Al Qadsia ended a seven-year drought when they clinched the League title for the eighth time.

SYRIA: Jabala beat Hottin 3-0 on penalties after a 2-2 draw in the Cup Final.

UAE: Ghanaian Abedi Pele scored the only goal of the Emir's Cup

Jubilo deprived of new Cup chance

WHILE Manchester United were opting out of the FA Cup in order to participate in the new World Club Championship, Asian champions Jubilo Iwata have been told to focus on their domestic competitions for at least another year.

The decision was as political as anything in Europe, but in a different vein. A decision that the Asian club champions would not represent Asia already had been taken: the place was to go to this year's Asian Super Cup winners instead, in order to raise the profile of that title.

Jubilo therefore were expecting to play off against Asian Cup-winners Cup winners, Al Ittihad of Saudi Arabia, in September for their World Club Championship berth. Bowing to strong Saudi pressure, however, the Asian Football Confederation decided to send last year's Asian Super Cup winners instead – Saudi Arabia's most popular club, Al Nasr.

Jubilo and Al Ittihad will still get their chance to qualify for the next edition of the tournament, but the whole farce says a lot about the continuing imbalance of power in Asian football.

Back home, with the J.League Division One taking a rest between stages, the focus was on the national teams. The Under-22s scored 52 goals in eight matches in the Olympic qualifiers against Hong Kong, Malaysia, Nepal and the Philippines but the games were so one-sided it was hard to say if the team played well or not.

The brightest spot was the emergence of 21-year-old striker Kota Yoshihara, who plays for Consadole Sapporo in Division Two. He was called up for the full national team at the Copa America, to replace injured Masashi Nakayama. He won his first full cap against Paraguay.

Former national team boss Shu Kamo has taken over from Bunji Kimura at Kyoto. JEF United Ichihara have replaced German Bert Engels with Nicolae Zamfir, former Romanian youth and Olympic coach, and Urawa Reds have sacked Hiromi Hara, but no replacement has been announced yet.

Bellmare Hiratsuka, who finished bottom of the First Stage, received a fresh shock when their main sponsor, the Fujita construction company, said they would withdraw support at the end of the season. The collapse of Yokohama Flugels was also triggered by the withdrawal of a construction company, Sato Kogyo.

Bellmare are now trying to drum up more community support in order to survive next season. In the meantime, all foreign players have been released. Ricardinho has signed for Sao Paulo, and Pavel Badea for Kashiwa Reysol.

Hristo Stoichkov has left Kashiwa Reysol. After retiring from the Bulgarian national team in June, he was expected back in Japan, but he kept on postponing, until cancelling his return for good. He had scored 12 goals in 27 J.League games.

The J.League now has a fifth British player, following Gary Lineker at Nagoya Grampus Eight, Mark Bowen at Shimizu S-Pulse and Ian Crook and Don Goodman at Sanfrecce Hiroshima. He is Mark Burke, signed on a six-month contract by Omiya Ardija from Fortuna Sittard of Holland.

Mike Plastow & Michi Ishijima

Final, in the 113th minute, to defeat Al Shabab.

SAUDI ARABIA: In their run-up to the Confederations Cup in Mexico, the national team went down 1-0 to Lithuania in a home friendly. The Saudis, paired to play in the same group with Mexico, Bolivia and Egypt, were also scheduled to meet Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago in warm-up games during their training camp in Los Angeles before going to Mexico.

The Saudi FA have sacked Olympic soccer coach Pieter Hamburg, following the team's dismal performance in the World Youth Cup in Nigeria.

OLYMPICS: Bahrain claimed two surprise 2-0 victories, at home against Iran and away to Lebanon, to clinch a place in the final round of Asia's Olympic qualifiers for Sydney 2000.

Bahrain, playing in Group 4, thus joined both Qatar (Group 1 winners) and Kuwait (Group 2 winners) in the final round of nine countries which will produce the three to represent Asia in the Olympic tournament.

In Group 3, favourites Saudi Arabia beat hosts Jordan 3-1 in Amman.

Mohamed Chbaro

BANGLADESH: Abahani retained the national Federation Cup after they had withstood a Muktijoddah onslaught for nearly two hours in the Final. Abahani scored with all five attempts in the penalty shoot-out.

SOUTH KOREA: Josip Simic was named Man of the Tournament after he had helped Croatia to win the four-nation Korean Cup.

Azam Mahmood

INDIA: FC COCHIN, the first Indian club to turn professional, are also the first to go public, and are to issue shares worth £1.5million. Cochin have the backing of much of Kerala State, with 30 million inhabitants.

The new season began with the McDowell Cup, which was won by Tollygunge Agragami.

Bhasi Malaparamba & GC Das

Pro-file Shinji Jo

Japan's leading light – at 19

"MAN of the match in every game I've seen him play, at all levels. His talent is unbelievable." That's how Ossie Ardiles, then manager of Shimizu S-Pulse, described local Shimizu schoolboy Shinji Ono, the one who had got away and signed for J.League rivals Urawa Reds.

In his first season as a full professional, Ono was both J.League and Asian Young Player of the Year, as well as Most Valuable Player of the Under-19 Asian Youth Tournament. He also made a brief appearance at the World Cup, replacing Hiroshi Nanami against Jamaica, and starred at the Asian Games for the Under-21s.

In April he was the captain who led Japan to the Final of the Under-20 World Youth Cup in Nigeria. Their hopes of victory faded the moment he received his second yellow card of the tournament in the semi-finals.

Ono's busy schedule continued with the Olympic squad in June, helping Japan to amass 25 goals in four games in the first round of qualifiers in Hong Kong, of which he netted five.

National coach Philippe Troussier also called him up to service as Japan's chancemaker in the Copa America, only to be over-ruled by the JFA, who wanted to keep the Olympic team together. There are times when it seems that, in Hidetoshi Nakata's absence, Ono has the task of holding Japanese football together on his own. And he's not 20 until September 27.

It's not unusual for a boy's fame to precede him, but the anticipation of Ono's J.League debut last year pushed out almost all other football stories. He could not possibly be that good; but he was, making his debut for his club and the full national team in the space of two weeks having come straight out of senior high school.

With his single-touch control and delightful through passes, he was quickly established as the linchpin in a Reds team that includes veterans such as Yugoslav World Cup midfielder Zeljko Petrovic and Aitor Beguiristain of Spain.

Ono also scored nine League goals. That was one of last year's few failures; at the start of the season, he had set himself a secret target of 10.

Ono is cool and quick with the ball, and equally good with both feet. He knows where the play is and sends the ball there directly. He has a delicate touch, a powerful shot, and is a dead-ball specialist.

He stands out from his generation to a degree that current Asian Player of the Year Nakata never did in his teens.

Ono is in one sense a product of the old school, literally, for he went to Shimizu Commercial Senior High, the same school as Hiroshi Nanami (who has just moved to Venezia) and many other J.League stars.

He is also new, however, in the way that Nakata is, for his ability to see where his team-mates are running and bring out the best in their play. Ono still lacks the physical power and extraordinary possession skills of Nakata, but he releases the ball so fast and accurately that it hardly matters. He has learned the virtues of simplicity faster than Nakata ever did.

Ono is on record as saying that he fancies going to the Premier League, "because so many teams play enjoyable football there". Japan is looking too small for Shinji Ono. The question is not if he leaves for something bigger, but when.

Mike Plastow & Michi Ishijima

Fact file

Club Urawa Reds
Born September 27, 1979
International debut April 1998, v South Korea
International caps 3

Ghana get in gear and go through

Mark Gleeson on the Olympic qualifying tournament

GHANA, one of only two African countries to win an Olympic football medal, got themselves out of a sticky situation to reach the next round of the Sydney 2000 qualifiers.

Ghana had played poorly in the first leg of their first round tie against Tanzania, narrowly winning 2-1 at home, and were expected to go out after the return match in Dar-es-Salaam. But Ghana's Meteors restored their much-vaunted reputation by scoring the first goal in the second leg, through Joseph Eyafam, just after half-time, and then going on to another 2-1 win.

Stephen Mapunda took only three minutes to equalise, but Hamza Mohamed made sure of Ghana's progress with their second goal 15 minutes from time.

Ghana, who were bronze medallists in 1992, join Cameroon, Guinea and South Africa, the other Group 2 qualifiers, in the next stage. Both Cameroon and Guinea had comfortable margins, but South Africa were pushed all the way before beating Togo 3-2 on aggregate.

Atlanta gold medallists Nigeria also are through, despite losing 3-2 to Namibia in the second leg in Windhoek. Nigeria's Eagles advanced 6-3 on aggregate and are joined in the next round of the Group 1 qualifiers by Angola, Zimbabwe and Uganda, who caused an upset by eliminating Zambia in Lusaka.

Uganda had only a 1-0 lead from the first leg but held Zambia to a 2-1 margin in the return and qualified on away goals.

In Group 3, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia are through the first round. Morocco had the easiest passage of the lot after the Democratic Republic of Congo failed to show up in Rabat. DR Congo led 2-1 from the first leg but apparently could not afford the plane tickets to north Africa for the return.

Referee row continues

IS AFRICAN football facing a refereeing crisis? Are standards dropping to unacceptable levels?

Confederation of African Football (CAF) president Issa Hayatou says that there IS a crisis in African refereeing and has expressed his disappointment at declining standards.

But the man in charge of African referees, Farah Addo, denies that there is anything wrong with referees on the continent, and is calling criticism of them "a colonial plot".

The conflicting views appear within a few pages of each other in the latest issue of *CAF News*, the official publication of African soccer's governing body.

Hayatou said he is upset with the performance of African referees in recent months, particularly so soon after African officials were appointed to handle the World Cup Final last year.

A Moroccan, Said Belqoba, was the referee for the Final between France and Brazil at Stade de France, and Achmat Salie of South Africa was a linesman. But that highlight has been blighted, says Hayatou, by some bizarre decisions in recent games at all levels of CAF competitions.

"This refereeing has tarnished our image but we have not been silent about it, taking sanctions where necessary," he says. "I don't believe there has been corruption among the referees but I must acknowledge that our refereeing is well short of what Africa has a right to expect.

"Some matches have been distorted by some whimsical decisions and we suspended nine referees and assistant referees because of it," he wrote.

But this criticism has been rejected by Somalia-born Addo, a senior CAF executive committee member and long-standing chairman of the referees' committee. "African refereeing has reached a good standard and has risen tremendously," he writes. "Our detractors do not wish to recognise this progress but they are colonists with polluted personal interests that have no relation to sport."

African first...Said Belqoba refereed the 1998 World Cup Final

In effect, Addo is accusing the thousands of angry black South African fans, who watched Bafana Bafana being beaten by some dubious refereeing of an African Nations Cup qualifier in Gabon last April, of being colonists!

The Congolese referee of that game, Joseph Mandzioukouta, has since been removed from the list of CAF appointments – after a protest by the South African Football Association.

COSAFA CUP

New-look Angola make semi-finals

ANGOLA put the disappointment of failing to qualify for the African Nations Cup finals behind them by reaching the semi-finals of the Cosafa Castle Cup, the annual regional tournament, which is in its third edition.

The Angolans have overhauled their national team, under veteran Brazilian coach Djalma Cavalcante, and the new mix of teenagers and home-based players is being seen as the next generation, to challenge for a place at the 2002 World Cup.

Their 1-0 win over Lesotho in the first of the southern African championship quarter-finals is the start of the rehabilitation of the team and came in impressive style at Maseru's Sesotho stadium.

The 21-year-old striker Betinho, who was at Germany's Hertha Berlin on trial late last year, scored the only goal in the 25th minute, smashing home from close range after Lesotho veteran Teele Ntsonyana had played the ball straight to him.

The three other semi-finalists will come from Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and holders Zambia, the last two making their competition debuts in the quarter-finals, after getting a bye past the opening round.

ROUND UP

Big names say goodbye to Nkono

CAMEROON's former World Cup goalkeeper Thomas Nkono has finally retired, after playing in a tribute match in Yaounde with several of his colleagues from almost 30 years in football.

They included Hristo Stoichkov, George Weah, Roger Milla, Abedi Pele and Nkono's great rival for the Cameroon goalkeeper's position, Joseph-Antoine Bell.

Nkono, the first man to win the African Footballer of the Year award twice, is now goalkeeping coach of the Cameroon national team.

Elsewhere in **CENTRAL AFRICA**, **GABON** international Theodore Nzue Nguema, leading scorer in the African Nations Cup qualifiers, has been transferred from Tunisia's Zarzis to Sporting Braga in the Portuguese First Division.

At home in Gabon, US Bitam have a one-point lead over Mbilinga after 12 rounds of the championship.

EAST AFRICA

SIMBA SC head the Super League in **UGANDA** with a nine-point lead over Kampala City Council, although defending champions SC Villa and the highly-fancied Express have several games in hand.

MADAGASCAR have withdrawn from the All-Africa Games, and will be replaced by the Mauritius Under-23 side. The tournament takes place in Johannesburg in September.

The ban on soccer in **MAURITIUS**, imposed by the government after soccer-related deaths in fan rioting, has now been lifted.

St Pierroise have a three-point lead over Stade Tamponnaise in the title race on the island of **REUNION**.

NORTH AFRICA

IN **EGYPT**, Zamalek beat Ismailia 3-1 to win the Cup and qualify for next year's African Cup-winners Cup. Esperance completed the double in **TUNISIA**, beating Club Africain 2-1 in the Cup Final.

The match was decided in extra time with a winner from Hassan Gabsi.

Esperance beat Olympique Beja 2-1 in their rearranged semi-final, played behind closed doors. The original tie was abandoned when three people died in crowd violence.

In **ALGERIA**, the Cup was won by USM Alger, for whom ex-internationals Billel Dziri and Hadj Adlane scored in a 2-0 win over JS Kabylie.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

FERROVIARIO MAPUTO won a dramatic finish to the **MOZAMBIQUE**

championship, drawing 2-2 with Costa do Sol on the final day but edging out their city rivals on goal difference. Both teams ended with 23 points from their 10 games in the play-off group.

ANGOLA's teenage international forward Mendonca is leaving Primeiro Agosto in Luanda for FC Porto, who are to loan him for the coming season to Sporting Espinho in Portugal's Second Division. There he will join Marito, the national team's goalkeeper, who was formerly with Petro.

Andrew Sinkala, the youthful **ZAMBIA** international midfielder, is joining Bayern Munich from Nchanga Rangers in an £800,000 move.

Nkana FC are the leaders in Zambia's Premier Division, three points ahead of Kabwe Warriors and Mufulira Wanderers.

Defence Force have a one-point lead at the halfway mark of the Premier League in the tiny mountain kingdom of **LESOTHO** but Arsenal are only one point behind.

Black Africa are the leaders in **NAMIBIA**'s Premier League.

Nigerian international Raphael Chukwu, who played in **SOUTH AFRICA** for the past three years and won the Footballer of the Year award in 1998, is leaving Mamelodi Sundowns for Italian club Bari.

WEST AFRICA

LIBERIA's AME Zion University have awarded George Weah an honorary philosophy doctorate for his role in civil and community relations. Dr Weah, as he now can be called, was praised for his contribution to sport and humanitarianism.

Liberia's reigning champions, Invincible Eleven, are unable to enter next season's championships because of financial problems.

Three Liberians, George Gebro (Mark Professionals), Dulee Johnson (Junior Professionals) and Frederick Vah (Busa FC) have gone to Milan for trials.

ASEC Abidjan, the reigning African champions, lead Pool A of the **IVORY COAST** championship with a four-point advantage over Stade Abidjan. In Pool B, unbeaten Africa Sports have opened an 11-point gap over SO Armee.

Former Ivorian international Guy Ssisoko has died at the age of 55 after a long illness. He won the African Champions Cup with Stade Abidjan in 1966 and helped the national team to the bronze medal at the 1965 All-Africa Games.

A bizarre report from **BURKINA FASO** claims that all 11 players of the army team USFA had their heads shaved and were imprisoned for a night after a 1-0 defeat by bottom-placed RCBD. The defeat ended the military men's title hopes and earned them the wrath of senior officers.

ASFA Yennega are the leaders in the Burkina Faso League, with a one-point advantage over Etoile Filante. The derby match between the two ended 3-0 in ASFA's favour.

Hearts of Oak, the defending champions, have stretched their lead in **GHANA**'s championship to five points over Accra Great Olympics.

BENIN internationals Philippe Iziack and Moucharef Alao have joined FC Sion in Switzerland from Cameroonian club Kadji.

In **SENEGAL**, Jeanne d'Arc lead the League by two points from CSS.

NIGERIA international Finidi George has made a substantial cash donation to All Stars FC in his home town, Port Harcourt, so that they can finish building a club house.

In the quarter-finals of the West African Football Union (WAFU) Cup, Dynamic of Togo beat Nigeria's Plateau United 3-1 in the first leg. ASKO Kara, Togo's other representatives, lost 4-2 to JS Tenerre from Niger.

Stars refuse to come out

THERE is still a place to be filled in the African Champions League after the delayed tie between Daring Club Motema Pembe of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria's Shooting Stars finished in bizarre fashion. Or, to be exact, did not finish.

The second leg in Kinshasa came to an abrupt halt when Stars refused to return for the second half, claiming they had been assaulted in their dressing-room and pelted with objects by home fans.

No amount of coaxing from the match officials could get the Nigerians, who had won the first leg 2-0 a month earlier, to play. So the result will now have to be decided by CAF.

Mark Gleeson

Final farewell...Thomas Nkono

Pro-file Chokri El Ouaer

'Mr Medals' keeps adding to the collection

FEW if any footballers in Africa can match Tunisian goalkeeper Chokri El Ouaer's collection of winner's medals.

Not only is the veteran the captain of his club and his country, but he also is the only man to have won all four African club competitions.

He and his team, Esperance, compiled this unique achievement in the African Champions Cup (1994), Super Cup (1995), CAF Cup (1997) and Cup-winners Cup (1998).

El Ouaer, who was born shortly after the 1966 World Cup, has also won a hatful of domestic titles, been to three successive African Nations Cup finals, and played in the World Cup last year in France.

In South Africa in 1996 he was named the best keeper at the Nations Cup. Last year in Burkina Faso, he was again singled out for the accolade.

Yet El Ouaer is most proud of the fact that he has been at Esperance for more than 20 years. "I will stay with them for the rest of my life," he says.

He was brought up just down the road from the club and has been playing there since he was nine. His senior debut came at the age of 17, although there was a temporary setback soon afterwards when Esperance signed Senegalese international Cheikh Seck.

"When I got my place back and I was keeping a player of the stature of Seck out of the team, it was a major boost for my confidence," he recalls.

"There's no real secret to the success – it's the fruit of hard work and sacrifices. But I don't think I've reached the top yet. I look forward to each contest and each new situation. I will keep on playing until I can't."

El Ouaer had told the Tunisian press he would quit the game at the end of the recently completed season, but has had a change of heart. "I think I can still play at the highest level for some years to come."

There was also some foreign interest in him after the World Cup finals, although few African goalkeepers have broken through in Europe.

"That would interest me because I have won all the titles possible with my club in the national league and in Arab and African competitions," he says. "I was particularly honoured to be named best goalkeeper after the first round of the World Cup in France. The only title that still eludes me is the African Nations Cup, and I hope I can win that next year."

El Ouaer has helped Tunisia through a near faultless qualifying campaign for Ghana and Nigeria, and he says: "Getting to the Final of the Nations Cup in South Africa in 1996 came because there was an element of surprise in our play. But despite the fact that Tunisian clubs have won many titles in Africa, we have never won the Nations Cup.

"The squad we have now have made this our main objective in the next year and we want to realise that ambition in Nigeria.

"Our structures and methods of preparation have changed with time, and these have made the players more professional."

Mark Gleeson

Fact file

Club Esperance
Country Tunisia
Born 15 August, 1966
International debut November 1990, v Ethiopia
International caps 56
Honours African Champions Cup 1994; African Cup-winners Cup 1998; CAF Cup 1997; African Super Cup 1995; Arab Champions Cup 1993; Arab Super Cup 1996; Tunisian championship 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1998, 1999; Tunisian Cup 1996, 1997, 1999.

World Service

Your complete guide to the month's stats and facts

INTERNATIONALS

Thursday, June 10

June 10 - Port of Spain - Caribbean Cup semi-final
Cuba 2 (Gandara pen 55, Alvarez 89)
Jamaica 0

Friday, June 11

June 11 - Port of Spain - Caribbean Cup semi-final
Trinida & Tobago 6
Haiti 1

Saturday, June 12

June 12 - Seoul - Korea Cup
South Korea 1
Mexico 1

Sunday, June 13

June 13 - Washington - friendly
United States 1 (Moore 88)
Argentina 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 40,199

June 13 - Trinidad & Tobago - Caribbean Cup Final
Trinidad & Tobago 2 (Rougier 66, John 118)
Cuba 1 (Prado 80)
HT: 0-0. **90min:** 1-1

June 13 - Seoul - Korea Cup
Croatia 2
Egypt 2

Tuesday, June 15

June 15 - Seoul - Korea Cup
South Korea 0
Egypt 0
Att: 35,000

Wednesday, June 16

June 16 - Seoul, Tongdaemun - Korea Cup
Croatia 2 (Biscan 44, Simic 63)
Mexico 1 (Luis Hernandez 25)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 15,000

Friday, June 18

June 18 - Seoul, Tongdaemon - Korea Cup
Egypt 0
Mexico 2 (Osomo 2, 85)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,000

Saturday, June 19

June 19 - Asmara - AfNC qual
Eritrea 1 (Fishaye 81)
Mozambique 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,000

June 19 - Dakar - AfNC qual
Senegal 1 (Salif Keita 10)
Burundi 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000

Sunday, June 20

June 20 - Algiers - AfNC qual
Algeria 2 (Hamid 39, 56)
Uganda 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000

June 20 - Luanda - AfNC qual
Angola 2 (Zico 67, Jabaru 69)
South Africa 2 (Mkhalele 32, 48)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 25,000

June 20 - Kinshasa - AfNC qual
Congo 0
Zambia 1 (Sinkala pen 46)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 40,000

June 20 - Conakry - AfNC qual
Guinea 2 (Fode Camara 53, 64)
Togo 1 (Fiawo 61)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 28,000

June 20 - Abidjan - AfNC qual
Ivory Coast 0
Mali 0
Att: 45,000

June 20 - Monrovia - AfNC qual
Liberia 2 (Makor pen 50, Weah 85)
Tunisia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 18,000

June 20 - Abirons, Reunion - AfNC qual
Mauritius 2 (Francois 45, Perle 73)
Gabon 2 (Nzaboutamba 37, N'Zue Nguema 72)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 100

Wednesday, June 23

June 23 - Santiago - friendly
Chile 0
Ecuador 0
Att: 12,000. **Ref:** Jimenez (Arg)
Chile: Marcelo Ramirez - Villarroel, Vargas, Reyes, Miguel Ramirez, Ponce, Cartes, Acuna, Sierra, Zamorano, Salas.
Ecuador: Cevallos - Anangono, Ivan Hurtado, Quinones, De la Cruz, George, Blandon, Alloni, Moreira, Graziani, Delgado.

June 23 - Lima - friendly
Peru 3 (Pizarro 58, Jorge Soto 67, Solano 78)
Venezuela 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Arana (Per)
Peru: Ibanez - Jorge Soto, Rebosio, Reynoso, Olivares, Jose Soto, Jayo, Pereda, Solano, Maestri, Holsen.
Venezuela: Vega - McIntosh, Mea Vitali, Rey, Rojas, Duno, Bidolglio, Hernandez, Chacon, Rondon, Noriega.

Thursday, June 24

June 24 - Asuncion - friendly
Paraguay 2 (Ovelar 46, Ayala pen 71)
Colombia 1 (Bonilla 58)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000
Paraguay: Tavarelli (Villar) - Arce, Ayala, Caniza, Toledo, Gavilan, Paredes, Acuna, Santa Cruz, Caballero (Enciso), Cardozo (Ovelar).
Colombia: Calero - Quintana, Bermudez, Yepes, Viveros, Bolano (Cortez), Morantes, Lozano, Grisales, Bonilla (Zambrano), Ricard (Congo).

Saturday, June 26

June 26 - Buenos Aires - friendly
Argentina 0
Lithuania 0 Att: 30,000

June 26 - Curitiba - friendly
Brazil 3 (Alex 24, Roberto Carlos 54, Ronaldo 76)
Latvia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000

Tuesday, June 29

June 29 - Asuncion - Copa Am
Paraguay 0
Bolivia 0
Att: 40,000. **Ref:** Sanchez (Chl)
Paraguay: Tavarelli - Arce, Ayala, Gamarra, Toledo, Enciso, Gavilan, Acuna, Cuevas (Caballero 46), Santa Cruz (Alvarenga 67), Ovelar (Benitez 46).
Bolivia: Fernandez - Ribera, Pena, Sandy, Castillo, Cristalo, Soria, Tufino, Sanchez (Coimbra 83), Gutierrez (Moreno 61), Antelo (Etcheverry, 46).

June 29 - Asuncion - Copa Am
Japan 2 (Lopes 6, Miura 78)
Peru 3 (Jorge Soto 70, Holsen 74, 82)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Moreno (Ecu)
Japan: Narazaki - Mochizuki (Miura 62), Ihara, Akita, Fujita, Ito, Hattori, Tasaka (Fukunishi 30), Nanami, Jo, Lopes (Oku 72).
Peru: Ibanez - Reynoso, Rebosio, Jose Soto, Jorge Soto, Solano, Pereda (Mendoza 81), Palacios (Holsen 46), Jayo, Maestri (Velasquez 89), Pizarro.

Wednesday, June 30

June 30 - Ciudad del Este - Copa Am
Mexico 1 (Hernandez 60)
Chile 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,000
Mexico: Campos - Pardo, Suarez, Marquez, Lara, Carmona, Garcia Aspe (Sanchez 76), Zepeda (Palencia 46), Ramon Ramirez, Blanco (Chavez, 80), Luis Hernandez.
Chile: Marcelo Ramirez - Vargas, Miguel Ramirez, Reyes, Rojas, Parraguez, Acuna (Pedro Gonzalez 81), Valencia, Pizarro (Estay 63), Zamorano, Salas.

June 30 - Ciudad del Este - Copa Am
Brazil 7 (Ronaldo 27, 63, Amoroso 48, 81, Emerson Ferreira 40, Ronaldinho 74, Rivaldo 83)
Venezuela 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 25,000
Brazil: Dida - Cafu (Evanilson 79), Odvan, Antonio Carlos, Roberto Carlos (Serginho 76), Emerson, Vampeta, Rivaldo, Alex (Ronaldinho 72), Amoroso, Ronaldo.
Venezuela: Vega - McIntosh (Jimenez 46), Alvarez, Rey, Jorge Rojas, Tortolero, Vera (Duno 70), Bidoglio, Urdaneta, Noriega, Hernandez (Moran 61).

Thursday, July 1

July 1 - Asuncion - Copa Am
Colombia 1 (Bonilla 21)
Uruguay 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,000
Colombia: Calero - Quintana, Bermudez, I Cordoba, Viveros, Bolano, Lozano, Betancourt, Grisales (Ramirez 81), Bonilla (Zambrano 61) Ricard (Montano 61).
Uruguay: Carini - Pilipauskas, Lopez, Fleurquin (Picun 73), Bergara (Callejas 58), Coelho, Lembo, Vespa (Guigou 46), Magallanes, Zalayeta, Alvez.

July 1 - Luque - Copa Am
Argentina 3 (Simeone 13, Palermo 54, 62)
Ecuador 1 (Kaviedes 77)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 16,000
Argentina: Burgos - Ibarra, Ayala, Samuel, Sorin, Zanetti, Simeone, Riquelme (Aimar 90), Barros Schelotto (C Gonzalez 75), Palermo, G Lopez (Guglielminpietro 67).
Ecuador: Cevallos - Ivan Hurtado, Quinonez, Montano, De la Cruz, Blandon, Ibarra (Aguinaga 61), Carabali (Zamora 61), George, Delgado (Kaviedes 46), Graziani.

Friday, July 2

July 2 - Asuncion - Copa Am
Peru 1 (Zuniga 87)
Bolivia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 42,000
Peru: Ibanez - Jorge Soto, Reynoso, Rebosio, Jose Soto, Pereda (Ciurlizza), Jayo, Palacios, Solano, Maestri (Zuniga 85), Pizarro (Holsen 57). *Sent off: Zuniga 90min.*
Bolivia: Fernandez - Rivera, Pena, Sandy, Castillo, Soria, Tufino, Cristalo (Ochoaizpur 65), Moreno, Sanchez (Liendo 82), Guttierez (Etcheverry 62).

July 2 - Asuncion - Copa Am
Paraguay 4 (Benitez 19, 68, Santa Cruz 40, 86)
Japan 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 45,000
Paraguay: Tavarelli - Arce, Ayala (Caniza 55), Gamarra, Toledo, Gavilan (Paredes 68), Enciso, Acuna, Ovelar (Cuevas 77), Benitez, Santa Cruz.
Japan: Kawagushi - Saito, Soma, Akita, Morokia, Ito, Nanami (Fujita 46), Fukunishi (Miura 20), Ando, Lopes, Jo.

Saturday, July 3

July 3 - Asmara - AfNC qual play-off
Eritrea 0
Zimbabwe 1 (Tewolde og 25)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,000

July 3 - Ciudad del Este - Copa Am
Brazil 2 (Amoroso 18, Alex 45)
Mexico 1 (Terrazas 73)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 15,000
Brazil: Dida - Cafu, Odvan, Antonio Carlos, Roberto Carlos, Emerson Ferreira, Vampeta, Alex (Flavio Conceicao 76), Rivaldo, Ronaldo, (Joao Carlos 89), Amoroso (Ronaldinho 81). *Sent off: Rivaldo.*
Mexico: Campos - Pardo, Suarez, Sanchez, Carmona, Lara, Rafael Garcia (Osorno 63), Garcia Aspe (Torrado 46), Chavez (Terrazas 46), Blanco, Hernandez.

July 3 - Ciudad del Este - Copa Am
Chile 3 (Zamorano 5, Sierra 21, Tortolero og 65)
Venezuela 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 16,000
Chile: Marcelo Ramirez - Vargas, Reyes, Palacios, Aros, Miguel Ramirez, Acuna, Estay (Valencia 72), Sierra (Parraguez 46), Zamorano (Gonzalez 78), Salas. *Sent off: Salas.*
Venezuela: Vega - Jimenez, Alvarez, Rey, Echenausi, Tortolero, Vera, Bidoglio, Urdaneta (Hernandez 60), Noriega (Rondon 55), Moran (Garcia 55).

Sunday, July 4

July 4 - Luque - Copa Am
Colombia 3 (I Cordoba pen 10, Congo 78, Montano 86)
Argentina 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000
Colombia: Calero - Bolano, I Cordoba, Bermudez, Viveros, Quintana, Lozano, Grisales, Betancourt (Montano 55), Ricard (Congo 76), Bonilla (Zambrano 66).
Argentina: Burgos - Vivas (Ibarra 61), Ayala, Samuel, Sorin (Cagna 46), Simeone, Zanetti, C Gonzalez, Riquelme, Barros Schelotto (Guglielminpietro 68), Palermo.

July 4 - Luque - Copa Am
Uruguay 2 (Zalayeta 72, 74)
Ecuador 1 (Kaviedes 77)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 16,000
Ecuador: Cevallos - Ivan Hurtado, Quinonez, De la Cruz, Montano, Blandon, George (Moreira 66), Aguinaga, Carabali (Zamora 61), Graziani (Delgado 65), Kaviedes.
Uruguay: Carini - Pilipauskas, Lembo, Picun, Bergara (Guigou 66), Coelho (Vespa 76), Garcia, Fleurquin, Alvez, Zalayeta, Pacheco (Callejas 65).

Monday, July 5

July 5 - Pedro Juan Caballero - Copa Am
Bolivia 1 (Erwin Sanchez 53)
Japan 1 (Lopes pen 73)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,000
Bolivia: Fernandez - Rivera (Ochoaizpur 88), Pena, Oscar Sanchez, Castillo (Etcheverry 76), Tufino, Cristaldo, Gutierrez, Erwin Sanchez, Antelo, Moreno (Quinteros 46). *Sent off: Oscar Sanchez 44min.*
Japan: Narazaki - Morioka, Ihara, Akita, Hattori, Ito, Nanami (Miura 69), Toshiya (Oku 65), Mochizuki, Lopes, Okano (Jo 64). *Sent off: Ihara 77min.*

July 5 - Pedro Juan Caballero - Copa Am
Paraguay 1 (Santa Cruz 87)
Peru 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,000
Paraguay: Tavarelli - Arce, Caniza, Gamarra, Toledo, Acuna, Caniza, Gavilan, Enciso, Ovelar (Paredes 46), Benitez (Caballero 71).
Peru: Ibanez - Rebosio, Jose Soto, Olivares, Pereda (Jorge Soto 82), Guadalupe, Velasquez, Palacios (Holsen 68), Ciurlizza, Pizarro, Mendoza.

Tuesday, July 6

July 6 - Ciudad del Este - Copa Am
Mexico 3 (Blanco 21, 40, Osorno 30)
Venezuela 1 (Urdaneta 73)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 20,000
Mexico: Rios - Sanchez, Rafael Garcia, Almaguer (Suarez 46), Carmona, Torrado (Cabrera 46), Lara, Palencia, Chavez (Terrazas 63), Blanco, Osorno. *Sent off: Blanco.*
Venezuela: Sanhouse - Jimenez, Rey, Duno (Arango 57), Echenausi, Mea Vitali, Bidoglio, Vera, Urdaneta, Noriega (Casseres 63), Moran (Garcia 78).

July 6 - Ciudad del Este - Copa Am
Brazil 1 (Ronaldo pen 30)
Chile 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000
**Match abandoned due to fog, 85min; result stood.*
Brazil: Dida - Evanilson, Odvan, Joao Carlos, Roberto Carlos, Vampeta (Beto 17), Ze Roberto, Alex (Christian 75), Ronaldo, Amoroso (Ronaldinho 46).

Chile: Marcelo Ramirez - Contreras, Miguel Ramirez, Margas, Rojas, Cartes, Parraguez (Palacios 46), Villarroel (Aros 71), Sierra, Zamorano (Nunes 46), Gonzalez.

Wednesday, July 7

July 7 - Luque - Copa Am
Colombia 2 (Morantes 37, Ricard 39)
Ecuador 1 (Graziani 50)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 5,000
Colombia: Higuita - Jersson Gonzalez, Portocarreno, Yepes, Cortes, Viveros, Grisales, Ramirez, Morantes (Bonilla 68), Ricard (Congo 64), Zambrano (Montano 57).
Ecuador: Cevallos - Anangono, Montano, Ivan Hurtado, Coronel, De la Cruz, Carabali (Ayovi 46), Blandon, Aguinaga (Sanchez 70), Graziani, Kaviedes (Ascencio 86).

July 7 - Luque - Copa Am
Argentina 2 (Gonzalez 2, Palermo 57)
Uruguay 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000
Argentina: Burgos - Vivas, Ayala, Samuel, Sorin, Simeone, Cagna (Husain 86), Riquelme, Barros Schelotto (Pochettino 76), Palermo (G Lopez 78), Gonzalez. *Sent off: Vivas 57min.*
Uruguay: Carini - Del Campo, Picun, Lembo, Bergara (Romero 59), Fleurquin (Giugou 46), Coelho, Magallanes, Vespa, Alvez (Pacheco 46), Zalayeta.

Saturday, July 10

July 10 - Asuncion - Copa Am quarter-final
Peru 3 (Palacios 5, Pereda 15, Solano 41)
Mexico 3 (Hernandez 29, pen 35, Torrado 88)
HT: 3-2. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Souza. *Mexico 4-2 on pens*
Peru: Ivanez - Jorge Soto, Rebosio, Reynoso, Jose Soto, Pereda, Jayo, Palacios, Solano, Maestri (Pizarro 80), Holsen (Zuniga 25; Ciurlizza 66).
Mexico: Campos - Marquez, Suarez, Sanchez (Rafael Garcia 70), Torrado, Zepeda, Garcia Aspe (Osorno), Ramirez, Hernandez, Palencia (Terrazas 90).

July 10 - Asuncion - Copa Am quarter-final
Paraguay 1 (Benitez 15)
Uruguay 1 (Zalayeta 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 45,000. *Uruguay 5-3 on pens*
Paraguay: Tavarelli - Arce, Gamarra, Caniza, Toledo, Enciso, Paredes, Alvarenga (Ovelar 68), Acuna, Benitez, Santa Cruz (Caballero 76).
Uruguay: Carini - Del Campo, Picun, Lembo (Lopez 90), Bergara (Guigou 63), Fleurquin, Coelho, Magallanes, Garcia, Zalayeta, Alvez (Alonso 58).

Sunday, July 11

July 11 - Luque - Copa Am quarter-final
Chile 3 (Reyes 25, 50, Zamorano 64)
Colombia 2 (Bolano 8, Bonilla 35)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)
Chile: Marcelo Ramirez - Vargas, Miguel Ramirez, Reyes, Palacios, Aros, Acuna, Estay (Cartes 79), Sierra (Pizarro, 65), Zamorano, Gonzalez (Nunes 88).
Colombia: Calero - Quintana, Ivan Cordoba, Bermudez, Cortes, Lozano, Bolano (Ramirez 46), Betancourt (Morantes 69), Grisales, Bonilla, Ricard.

July 11 - Ciudad del Este - Copa Am quarter-final
Brazil 2 (Rivaldo 33, Ronaldo 48)
Argentina 1 (Sorin 11)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 26,000. **Ref:** Mendez (Uru)
Brazil: Dida - Cafu, Joao Carlos, Antonio Carlos, Roberto Carlos, Flavio Conceicao, Emerson, Rivaldo, Ze Roberto (Beto 74), Ronaldo, Amoroso (Christian 80).
Argentina: Burgos - Pochettino, Ayala, Samuel, Sorin (G Lopez 70), Simeone (Cagna 70), Zanetti, Ortega, Riquelme, Palermo, Gonzalez.

Tuesday, July 13

July 13 - Asuncion - Copa Am semi-final
Uruguay 1 (Lembo 23)
Chile 1 (Zamorano 63)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Aquino (Par)
Uruguay 5-3 on pens
Uruguay: Carini - Del Campo, Picun, Lembo, Bergara (Callejas 81), Fleurquin (Guigou 65), Coelho, Garcia, Magallanes, Zalayeta, Alvez (Alonso 53).
Chile: Marcelo Ramirez - Vargas, Miguel Ramirez, Reyes, Aros, Palacios, Acuna, Sierra (Pizarro 74), Estay, Zamorano (Gonzalez 89), Salas.

Wednesday, July 14

July 14 - Ciudad del Este - Copa Am semi-final
Brazil 2 (Amoroso 25, Rivaldo 42)
Mexico 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 10,000
Brazil: Dida - Cafu, Antonio Carlos, Joao Carlos, Roberto Carlos, Emerson Ferreira, Flavio Conceicao (Beto 78), Rivaldo, Ze Roberto, Amoroso (Alex 80), Ronaldo (Ronaldinho 76).
Mexico: Campos - Terrazas (Ramirez 46), Suarez, Marquez, Carmona, Pardo, Torrado, Palencia (Osorno 55), Zepeda, Blanco, Hernandez.

Saturday, July 17

July 17 - Asuncion - Copa Am 3rd place play-off
Mexico 2 (Palencia 26, Zepeda 86)
Chile 1 (Palacios 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)
Mexico: Campos - Suarez, Marquez, Carmona, Ramirez, Torrado, I Zepeda, Rafael Garcia (Garcia Aspe 66), Palencia (Terrazas, 69), Blanco (Pardo 85), Hernandez.
Chile: Marcelo Ramirez - Vargas (Valencia 65), Reyes, Miguel Ramirez (Contreras 41), Palacios, Acuna, Aros, Estay, Sierra, Gonzalez (Nunez 65), Zamorano.

EUROPE

DENMARK

June 16: AGF 2 B93 1; FC Copenhagen 1 AB 0; Herfolge 3 AaB 2; Lyngby 2 Brondby 6; Silkeborg 1 Viborg 2; Vejle 4 Aarhus Fremad 1.

DENMARK – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AaB	33	17	13	3	65	37	64
Brondby	33	19	4	10	73	37	61
AB	33	17	5	11	49	36	56
Lyngby	33	14	10	9	55	60	52
Herfolge	33	12	11	10	44	36	47
Vejle	33	14	5	14	54	48	47
FC Copenhagen	33	12	10	11	55	52	46
Viborg	33	13	5	15	61	59	44
Silkeborg	33	10	14	9	52	53	44
AGF	33	11	10	12	45	55	43
Aarhus Fremad	33	7	8	18	51	73	29
B93	33	3	3	27	22	80	12

HUNGARY

June 16: Nyiregyhaza 3 Dunaferr 1; Videoton 2 Vasas 2; Ferencvaros 0 Kispest Honved 1; Vac 3 Haladas 1; Zalaegerszeg 2 Keruiet 1; Gyor 1 MTK 0; Ujpest 2 Gazszer 1; Debrecen 1 Siofok 0; BVSC 1 Diosgyor 3.

HUNGARY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MTK	34	27	2	5	77	26	83
Ferencvaros	34	19	7	8	61	40	64
Ujpest	34	20	3	11	58	40	63
Gyor	34	16	11	7	53	39	59
Vasas	34	15	10	9	51	44	55
Zalaegerszeg	34	15	8	11	43	37	53
Dunaferr	34	17	6	11	55	46	51
Diosgyor	34	14	9	11	56	54	51
Debrecen	34	14	7	13	53	40	49
Vac	34	13	10	11	51	49	49
Gazszer	34	11	11	12	37	40	44
Kispest Honved	34	11	9	14	38	48	42
Nyiregyhaza	34	10	9	15	44	52	39
Haladas	34	10	6	18	39	54	36
Siofok	34	7	9	18	32	49	30
Videoton	34	7	9	18	36	54	30
BVSC	34	7	6	21	34	53	27
Kerulet	34	4	6	24	40	93	18

NORWAY

June 16: Lillestrom 4 Valerenga 1; Moss 2 Stromsgodset 5; Odd Grenland 0 Molde 0; Skeid 0 Kongsvinger 1;Tromso 5 Bodo/Glimt 1; Viking 0 Rosenborg 2.
June 17: Stabaek 2 Brann 3.
June 19: Stromsgodset 1 Lillestrom 1.
June 20: Bodo/Glimt 2 Kongsvinger 0; Brann 3 Odd Grenland 0; Molde 3 Moss 1; Rosenborg 2 Stabaek 1; Viking 0 Skeid 1.
June 26: Odd Grenland 0 Rosenborg 0.
June 27: Lillestrom 0 Molde 1; Moss 0 Brann 2; Skeid 1 Bodo/Glimt 3; Stabaek 3 Viking 1; Tromso 3 Stromsgodset 2.
July 3: Tromso 1 Molde 2.
July 4: Bodo/Glimt 1 Valerenga 1; Kongsvinger 2 Stromsgodset 4; Moss 1 Rosenborg 4; Odd Grenland 1 Viking 3; Skeid 1 Stabaek 3.
July 7: Lillestrom 6 Kongsvinger 2; Stabaek 2 Stromsgodset 1; Viking 4 Molde 1; Valerenga 1 Tromso 3; Rosenborg 2 Brann 3.
July 11: Molde 3 Kongsvinger 2; Rosenborg 4 Lillestrom 0; Stabaek 2 Odd Grenland 5; Stromsgodset 0 Bodo/Glimt 1; Viking 1 Moss 1; Valerenga 2 Skeid 2.

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg	15	11	2	2	43	12	35
Molde	15	10	2	3	26	15	32
Stabaek	15	9	2	4	35	23	29
Brann	13	9	0	4	25	21	27
Lillestrom	14	8	2	4	32	25	26
Tromso	14	7	2	5	36	24	23
Viking	15	6	2	7	25	21	20
Odd Grenland	15	6	2	7	21	31	20
Bodo/Glimt	15	5	3	7	26	32	18
Valerenga	14	4	3	7	19	25	15
Skeid	15	4	2	9	17	35	14
Moss	15	4	1	10	21	33	13
Stromsgodset	15	4	1	10	22	35	13
Kongsvinger	14	3	0	11	20	36	9

PORTUGAL

PORTUGUESE CUP – FINAL

Friday, June 19

Campomaiorense 0
Beira Mar 1 (Ricardo Sousa 71) Att: 40,000

RUSSIA

June 19: Rostselmash 1 Chernomorets 0; Torpedo 2 Rotor 1; Lokomotiv NN 0 CSKA 2; Saturn 0 Spartak 3; Zhemchuzhina 1 Zenit 3; Lokomotiv M 4 Shinnik 1; Dinamo 1 Uralan 0; Kryliya Sovetov 0 Alaniya 3.
June 23: Chernomorets 1 Alaniya 0; Uralan 2 Kryliya Sovetov 1; Shinnik 3 Dinamo 1; Zenit 1 Lokomotiv M 2; Spartak 4 Zhemchuzhina 0; CSKA 1 Saturn 0; Rotor 2 Lokomotiv NN 3; Rostselmash 0 Torpedo 0.
June 27: Torpedo 3 Chernomorets 1; Lokomotiv NN 0 Rostselmash 0; Saturn 1 Rotor 0; Zhemchuzhina 2 CSKA 2; Lokomotiv M 0 Spartak 3; Dinamo 0 Zenit 1; Kryliya Sovetov 4 Shinnik 2; Alaniya 4 Uralan 2.
June 30: Rostselmash 4 Saturn 1.
July 3: Chernomorets 0 Uralan 0;Shinnik 1 Alaniya 1; Zenit 3 Kryliya Sovetov 1; Spartak 2 Dinamo 2; CSKA 1 Lokomotiv M 0; Rotor 0 Zhemchuzhina 0; Torpedo 3 Lokomotiv NN 2.
July 7: Chernomorets 0 Lokomotiv NN 1; Saturn 2 Torpedo 2; Zhemchuzhina 1 Rostselmash 1; Lokomotiv M 5 Rotor 1; Dinamo 1 CSKA 0; Kryliya Sovetov 3 Spartak 1; Alaniya 2 Zenit 2; Uralan 1 Shinnik 0.
July 11: Spartak 4 Rotor 1; Zenit 1 CSKA 1.
July 14: Zenit 2 Shinnik 1; Lokomotiv NN 2 Zhemchuzhina 1; Torpedo 2 Lokomotiv M 4; Rostselmash 1 Dinamo 3; Rotor 2 Kryliya Sovetov 1; CSKA 4 Alaniya 1; Spartak 3 Uralan 0; Saturn 3 Chernomorets 0.

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spartak	20	14	4	2	43	15	46
Lokomotiv M	16	11	2	3	37	17	35
CSKA	17	9	6	2	30	13	33
Torpedo	17	7	8	2	20	15	29
Dinamo	16	8	3	5	29	24	27
Alaniya	16	7	4	5	31	23	25
Zenit	17	6	7	4	23	18	25
Rostselmash	16	7	4	5	20	19	25
Lokomotiv NN	16	6	4	6	20	21	22
Rotor	17	5	3	9	22	32	18
Saturn	17	4	4	9	17	27	16
Kryliya Sovetov	17	4	3	10	22	31	15
Uralan	16	4	3	9	10	20	15
Chernomorets	16	3	4	9	15	29	13
Shinnik	16	2	6	8	10	23	12
Zhemchuzhina	16	0	7	9	9	31	7

SPAIN

Saturday, June 19

Racing Santander 0
Valladolid 2 (Caminero 18, Turiel 25) Att:18,000

Salamanca 1 (Vellisca 51)
Tenerife 2 (Mista 42, Emerson 84) Att: 5,800

Sunday, June 20

Alaves 2 (Julio Salinas 4, Magno 27)
Real Sociedad 1 (De Pedro 62) Att: 19,000
Betis Sevilla 1 (Oli 79)
Athletic Bilbao 4 (Ezquerro 35, J Etxeberria 45, Guerrero 65, Urzaiz pen 88) Att: 30,000

Celta 0
Atletico Madrid 1 (Solari 9) Att: 31,500

Espanyol 2 (Dario Silva 50, Galca pen 73)
Oviedo 1 (Jaime 29) Att: 35,100

Extremadura 2 (Gabrich 85, 90)
Villarreal 2 (Craioveanu 36, Albelda 81) Att: 12,000

Real Madrid 3 (Raul 38, 42, Morientes 47)
La Coruna 1 (Turu Flores 62) Att: 75,000

Valencia 3 (Ilie 12, 66, Mendieta 51)
Mallorca 0 Att: 45,000

Zaragoza 2 (Milosevic 6, 75)
Barcelona 0 Att: 27,000

SPAIN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	38	24	7	7	87	43	79
Real Madrid	38	21	5	12	77	62	68
Mallorca	38	20	6	12	48	31	66
Valencia	38	19	8	11	63	39	65
Celta	38	17	13	8	69	41	64
La Coruna	38	17	12	9	55	43	63
Espanyol	38	16	13	9	49	38	61
Athletic	38	17	9	12	53	47	60
Zaragoza	38	16	9	13	57	46	57
Real Sociedad	38	14	12	12	47	43	54
Betis Sevilla	38	14	7	17	47	58	49
Valladolid	38	13	9	16	35	44	48
Atletico Madrid	38	12	10	16	54	50	46
Oviedo	38	11	12	15	41	57	45
Racing Santander	38	10	12	16	41	53	42
Alaves	38	11	7	20	36	63	40
Extremadura	38	9	12	17	27	53	39
Villarreal	38	8	12	18	47	63	36
Tenerife	38	7	13	18	41	63	34
Salamanca	38	7	6	25	29	66	27

SPANISH CUP – FINAL

Saturday, June 26

Atletico Madrid 0
Valencia 3 (Claudio Lopez 34, 82, Mendieta 34)
Att: 59,000

SWEDEN

June 15: Helsingborgs 1 Elfsborg 1.
June 16: Orebro 3 Hammarby 1.
June 17: Halmstads 4 Djurgardens 1.
June 20: Kalmar 1 Norrkoping 1; Orgryte 0 Helsingborgs 1.
June 21: Elfsborg 2 AIK 2; Vastra Frolunda 2 Trelleborgs 1.
June 22: Malmo 1 IFK Gothenburg 1
June 23: Helsingborgs 1 Halmstads 0; Hammarby 2 Kalmar 2.
June 27: Trelleborgs 0 Orgryte 0.
June 28: Elfsborg 2 Vastra Frolunda 3; Norrkoping 0 AIK 1.
June 29: Djurgardens 3 Malmo 1.
June 30: Trelleborgs 1 Halmstads 1; IFK Gothenburg 0 Orebro 1.
July 1: Hammarby 3 Norrkoping 0; Orgryte 5 Elfsborg 1.
July 4: Kalmar 0 IFK Gothenburg 1.
July 5: Djurgardens 0 Orebro 1; Vastra Frolunda 0 AIK 1.
July 6: Malmo 0 Helsingborgs 4.
July 11: Halmstads 4 Helsingborgs 0; Malmo 2 Djurgardens 0.
July 14: Kalmar 4 Hammarby 1.
July 18: Orgryte 2 Trelleborgs 0.

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Orgryte	14	8	5	1	28	9	29
Helsingborgs	14	9	1	4	24	15	28
Halmstads	14	7	3	4	26	13	24
AIK	13	7	3	3	20	10	24
Kalmar	14	7	2	5	21	20	23
Orebro	13	7	1	5	14	15	22
Trelleborgs	14	5	4	5	24	21	19
Vastra Frolunda	13	5	3	5	15	18	18
Malmo	14	4	3	7	17	25	15
IFK Gothenburg	13	3	5	5	12	18	14
Elfsborg	13	3	3	7	19	26	12
Djurgardens	14	3	3	8	15	26	12
Norrkoping	13	2	5	6	11	20	11
Hammarby	14	2	5	7	15	25	11

UKRAINE

June 17: Metalurh D 1 Zirka 0; Tavriya 3 Dnipro 0; Mykolaiv 0 Shakhtar 3; Metalurh M 1 Nyva 0; Dynamo 1 Metalist 0; Karpaty 3 CSKA 3; Prykarpattya 0 Metalurh Z 0; Kryvbas 3 Vorskla 1.
June 21: Nyva 1 Dynamo 5; Zirka 2 Kryvbas 3; Shakhtar 2 Tavriya 0; Metalurh Z 2 Dnipro 2; Metalist 3 Karpaty 1.
June 25: CSKA 1 Metalurh Z 0; Dnipro 5 Metalurh D 1; Nyva 3 Mykolaiv 1; Metalist 0 Metalurh M 1; Karpaty 2 Dynamo 1; Vorskla 4 Prykarpattya 0.

UKRAINE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamo	30	23	5	2	75	17	74
Shakhtar	30	20	5	5	70	25	65
Kryvbas	30	16	11	3	43	18	59
Karpaty	30	15	10	5	52	34	55
Metalurh M	30	14	6	10	35	27	48
Metalist	30	14	5	11	31	32	47
CSKA	30	11	10	9	37	35	43
Metalurh Z	30	12	6	12	46	43	42
Tavriya	30	10	7	13	32	38	37
Vorskla	30	10	4	16	35	43	34
Zirka	30	9	7	14	31	40	34
Nyva	30	9	6	15	29	40	33
Dnipro	30	9	5	16	28	47	32
Metalurh D	30	7	7	16	28	51	28
Prykarpattya	30	6	6	18	24	57	24
Mykolaiv	30	2	6	22	17	66	12

SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Wednesday, June 9

Racing Club 1 (Villalba 83)
Belgrano Cordoba 1 (Ruffini 10)

June 12-13

Belgrano Cordoba 0
Talleres Cordoba 0

Boca Juniors 4 (Riquelme 4, Bermudez 10, Palermo pen 68, Barijjho 89)
Lanus 1 (Vilallonga 13)

Colon Santa Fe 1 (Unali 3)
Velez Sarsfield 1 (R Gonzalez 29)

Ferro Carril Oeste 0
Argentinos Juniors 0

Gimnasia J 0
Union Santa Fe 2 (Domizzi 1, Cabrol pen 50)

Gimnasia LP 1 (Romero 60)
Independiente 0

Huracan 0
Rosario Central 0

Newell's Old Boys 1 (Fuentes 3)
San Lorenzo 1 (Romagnoli 27)

Platense 0
River Plate 3 (Saviola 33, 76, Castillo 84)

Racing Club 0
Estudiantes 3 (Lanfranchini 8, Quatrocchi pen 48, Testa 73)

Wednesday, June 16

Newell's Old Boys 1 (Saldana 6)
Racing Club 2 (Zubeldia 67, Morales 87)

June 19-20

Argentinos Juniors 1 (Bennett 50)
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Castroman 3, Camps 30)

Estudiantes 0
Platense 2 (C Veron pen 17, Coyette 62)

Ferro Carril Oeste 0
Gimnasia J 1 (Comelles 43)

Independiente 4 (Calderon 14, 35, 70, V Lopez 27)
Huracan 1 (Casas 33)

Lanus 0
Gimnasia LP 0

River Plate 1 (Saviola 81)
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Fuertes pen 27)

Rosario Central 1 (E Gonzalez 64)
Belgrano Cordoba 1 (Sosa 83)

San Lorenzo 4 (Romeo 25, 55, 75, Saric 45)
Racing Club 0

Talleres Cordoba 1 (Pino 90)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Vojvoda 77)

Union Santa Fe 2 (Cabrol 16, 93)
Boca Juniors 2 (Barijho 33, Coloccini 54)

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Juniors	19	13	5	1	35	11	44
River Plate	19	11	4	4	37	19	37
San Lorenzo	19	10	6	3	33	19	36
Rosario Central	19	9	5	5	24	20	32
Independiente	19	8	5	6	32	26	29
Union Santa Fe	19	8	5	6	29	27	29
Newell's OB	19	7	6	6	30	22	27
Colon Santa Fe	19	6	8	5	28	22	26
Gimnasia LP	19	7	5	7	28	32	26
Belgrano Cordoba	19	6	7	6	20	20	25
Gimnasia J	19	7	4	8	28	37	25
Argentinos Jnrs	19	6	6	7	20	23	24
Velez Sarsfield	19	5	7	7	21	24	22
Racing Club	19	6	4	9	20	32	22
Estudiantes	19	4	9	6	18	18	21
Talleres Cordoba	19	4	8	7	23	26	20
Lanus	19	5	5	9	23	28	20
Platense	19	4	5	10	16	30	17
Ferro Carril Oeste	19	2	9	8	8	18	15
Huracan	19	2	6	11	15	35	12

Bottom two relegated

Libertadores Cup place play-off

Wednesday, June 23

River Plate 3 (Aimar 34, Angel 38, Saviola 81)
Gimnasia LP 2 (Romero 2, Sava 56)

BOLIVIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blooming	22	14	2	6	47	20	44
Bolivar	22	9	10	3	40	23	37
Bamin Real	22	9	6	7	37	36	33
Union Central	22	8	7	7	37	33	31
Independiente	22	9	4	9	40	39	31
Santa Cruz	22	9	4	9	35	49	31
Guabira	22	7	9	6	37	42	30
San Jose	22	9	2	11	35	37	29
J Wilstermann	22	8	5	9	41	44	29
Oriente	22	7	5	10	35	36	26
The Strongest	22	7	4	11	33	35	25
Destroyers	22	5	4	13	33	56	19

BRAZIL

COPA BRASIL – FINAL

June 20: Juventude 2 Botafogo 1.
June 27: Botafogo 0 Juventude 0
Juventude won 2-1 on agg

RIO CHAMPIONSHIP – FINAL

2nd leg - June 19
Flamengo 1 Vasco da Gama 0
Flamengo won on 2-1 agg

SAO PAULO CHAMP'SHIP – FINAL

2nd leg - June 20
Palmeiras 2 Corinthians 2
(Game suspended after 67 minutes because of fighting. Result stood; Corinthians won 5-2 on agg)

CHILE

June 10: Cobreloa 0 U de Chile 1; O'Higgins 2 U Catolica 5; Colo Colo 0 Dep Iquique 0; Santiago Morning 1 Rangers 0; Huachipato 1 Audax Italiano 1; Palestino 2 Dep Concepcion 1; Puerto Montt 3 Dep La Serena 0; Coquimbo Unido 2 Cobresal 1.
June 13: U Catolica 3 Colo Colo 0; O'Higgins 1 Palestino 4; Cobresal 2 Cobreloa 2; Dep La Serena 0 Huachipato 3; Audax Italiano 2 Santiago Morning 2; Dep Concepcion 3 Coquimbo Unido 3; Dep Iquique 5 Puerto Montt 3; U de Chile 3 Rangers 1.

CHILE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Chile	17	12	4	1	36	16	40
Cobreloa	17	9	6	2	41	16	33
U Catolica	17	9	5	3	38	20	32
Colo Colo	17	8	4	5	26	22	28
Palestino	17	8	2	7	33	28	26
Cobresal	17	7	4	6	33	27	25
Santiago Morning	17	7	4	6	22	22	25
Huachipato	17	6	6	5	27	25	24
Dep Concepcion	17	6	5	6	25	23	23
Puerto Montt	17	6	5	6	28	28	23
Dep Iquique	17	5	6	6	23	24	21
Audax Italiano	17	4	6	7	19	22	18
Coquimbo Unido	17	4	5	8	28	49	17
Dep La Serena	17	2	8	7	23	37	14
O'Higgins	17	3	2	12	21	44	11
Rangers	17	2	4	11	15	35	10

COLOMBIA

June 10: America 4 Dep Cali 1; Millonarios 1 At Nacional 1; Bucaramanga 0 Indep Santa Fe 1; Once Caldas 2 Tolima 0; At Junior 1 Cortulua 0; Indep Medellin 3 Dep Pasto 0; At Huila 2 Envigado 1; Quindio 0 Union Santa Marta 1.
June 13: Tolima 3 At Nacional 1; Millonarios 1 At Junior 0; Union Santa Marta 0 Indep Santa Fe 1; Cortulua 3 Once Caldas 3; Dep Pasto 1 America 1; Indep Medellin 0 At Huila 0; Envigado 1 Quindio 3; Dep Cali 3 Bucaramanga 2.
June 20: America 2 Dep Cali 1; At Nacional 1 Indep Medellin 1; Indep Santa Fe 0 Millonarios 1; At Huila 1 Tolima 1; Quindio 0 Cortulua 1; Once Caldas 1 Envigado 0; At Junior Union Santa Marta 2; Bucaramanga 0 Dep Pasto 0.

COLOMBIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	22	11	7	4	42	27	40
Nacional	22	9	9	4	25	18	36
Once Caldas	22	9	7	6	34	19	34
At Junior	22	9	7	6	34	34	34
Tolima	22	7	11	4	25	20	32
Cortulua	22	8	7	7	31	31	31
Dep Cali	22	9	4	9	37	41	31
Indep Medellin	22	6	12	4	26	20	30
Bucaramanga	22	5	12	5	30	24	27
Indep Santa Fe	22	6	8	8	23	25	26
Dep Pasto	22	3	13	5	32	32	25
Millonarios	22	5	10	7	25	34	25
Quindio	22	6	6	10	32	40	24
Union Santa Marta	22	4	10	8	31	38	22
Envigado	22	6	4	12	21	32	22
At Huila	22	3	11	8	18	31	20

ECUADOR

June 13: Emelec 1 Barcelona 0; Aucas 0 LDU 1; El Nacional 2 Dep Quito 1; Dep Cuenca 2 Audaz Octubrino 0; Macara 2 Olmedo 4; Delfin 2 Espoli 0.

ECUADOR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
El Nacional	17	9	7	1	26	9	34
LDU	17	10	2	5	26	21	32
Emelec	17	9	2	6	33	23	29
Olmedo	17	7	6	4	21	20	27
Barcelona	17	7	4	6	19	20	25
Delfin	17	7	4	6	23	26	25
Dep Cuenca	17	7	3	7	23	25	24
Dep Quito	17	6	5	6	25	22	23
Macara	17	6	5	6	20	22	23
Espoli	17	6	3	8	23	21	21
Aucas	17	3	2	12	16	27	11
Audaz Octubrino	17	3	1	13	11	30	10

PERU

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

June 13: Alianza Lima 3 Dep Municipal 0; Sport Boys 3 Sporting Cristal 3; Cienciano 4 Juan Aurich 0; Melgar 2 Union Minas 1; Dep Pesquero 0 IMI Talara 1; Alianza Atletico 0 Universitario 2.
June 20: Sporting Cristal 3 Melgar 1; Alianza Lima 2 Cienciano 1; IMI Talara 1 Sport Boys 2; Juan Aurich 2 Alianza Atletico 0; Universitario 1 Dep Municipal 0; Union Minas 2 Dep Pesquero 1.

PERU – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Universitario	22	15	5	2	35	15	50
Alianza Lima	22	14	4	4	51	20	46
Sporting Cristal	222	11	8	3	50	23	41
Melgar	22	9	6	7	35	27	33
Cienciano	22	9	6	7	32	26	33
Sport Boys	22	7	9	6	29	30	30
Union Minas	22	6	7	9	29	29	25
Alianza Atletico	22	6	7	9	35	38	25
Dep Municipal	22	5	7	10	23	36	22
IMI Talara	22	5	4	13	22	55	19
Juan Aurich	22	4	6	12	21	38	18
Dep Pesquero	22	2	9	11	18	43	15

URUGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

June 13: Dep Maldonado 2 Defensor 4; Penarol 2 Cerro 0; Rampla Juniors 0 Bella Vista M 1; Bella Vista P 0 Tacuarembo 1; Danubio 2 Huracan Buceo 3; River Plate 3 Nacional 1.

URUGUAY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	14	11	1	2	35	10	34
Defensor	14	10	3	1	40	16	33
Danubio	14	8	2	4	39	24	26
Bella Vista M	14	7	5	2	25	15	26
Penarol	14	7	4	3	24	13	25
Cerro	14	7	0	7	24	30	21
Rentistas	14	4	5	5	15	14	17
Huracan Buceo	14	4	5	5	17	27	17
Dep Maldonado	14	4	4	6	22	25	16
River Plate	14	4	4	6	14	21	16
Frontera Rivera	14	3	4	7	16	20	13
Tacuarembo	14	4	1	8	12	23	13
Bella Vista P	14	3	4	7	9	21	13
Rampla Juniors	14	3	2	9	9	25	11
Liverpool	14	0	8	6	5	22	8

CONCACAF

USA

June 16: Columbus Crew 1 New England 1 *Columbus won on shoot-outs*; Dallas Burn 3 DC United 0.
June 19: Tampa Bay Mutiny 2 New England 3; DC United 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 2; Chicago Fire 2 San Jose Clash 0; Colorado Rapids 2 Dallas Burn 1.
June 20: Kansas City Wizards 6 MetroStars 0.
June 26: DC United 3 Kansas City Wizards 0; Miami Fusion 1 San Jose Clash 2; Columbus Crew 2 MetroStars 1; Dallas Burn 2 New England 0; Colorado Rapids 2 Chicago Fire 0.
June 27: Tampa Bay Mutiny 2 LA Galaxy 4.
June 30: MetroStars 1 Tampa Bay 1 *MetroStars won on shoot-outs*; Columbus Crew 3 San Jose Clash 3 *Columbus won on shoot-outs.*
July 2: Dallas Burn 1 Chicago Fire 2.
July 3: Tampa Bay 1 Kansas City Wizards 1 *Kansas City won on shoot-outs.*
July 4: New England 3 MetroStars 2; Colorado Rapids 0 Columbus Crew 3; LA Galaxy 1 Miami Fusion 2; Chicago Fire 1 Dallas Burn 1 *Chicago Fire won on shoot-outs*; San Jose Clash 1 DC United 1 *San Jose Clash won on shoot-outs.*
July 7: Kansas City Wizards 1 Colorado Rapids 2.
July 8: Tampa Bay Mutiny 2 San Jose Clash 1.
July 10: Miami Fusion 2 Columbus Crew 0; DC United 1 Colorado Rapids 2; Chicago Fire 2 MetroStars 0; Dallas Burn 5 Kansas City 0; Columbus Crew 1 DC United 1 *DC United won on shoot-outs.*
July 11: New England 2 LA Galaxy 5.

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	SW	SL	L	F	A	Pts
DC United	19	9	3	2	5	37	28	30
Columbus Crew	18	6	5	2	5	21	19	23
New England	17	5	3	4	5	25	28	18
Tampa Bay M	17	4	3	4	6	21	26	15
Miami Fusion	18	4	2	3	9	23	33	14
MetroStars	17	2	3	2	10	17	34	9

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	SW	SL	L	F	A	Pts
Colorado Rapids	16	10	2	2	2	30	19	32
Dallas Burn	19	9	1	6	3	34	15	28
Chicago Fire	17	9	1	2	5	27	18	28
Los Angeles G	17	7	3	4	3	22	15	24
San Jose Clash	18	2	8	1	7	24	32	14
Kansas City W	17	3	1	3	10	17	31	10

SW = shoot-out win; SL = shoot-out loss

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Brian Glanville's LAST WORD

'The FA was quite ready to prostitute its own historic Cup with the aim of buttering up FIFA and Blatter'

Turning Mother to prostitution

HORROR upon horror. The Football Association ready to prostitute the jewel in their crown, the FA Cup, Mother of All Competitions, to a redundant, half-baked pseudo World Club Championship in Brazil.

Changed his tune...Sports Minister Tony Banks

The ineffable Tony Banks – would you buy a used World Cup from this man? – wittering on about the vital importance of United's participation vis-a-vis the 2006 World Cup. The casual disavowing of what seems to have been a gentleman's agreement to let Germany bid in our place. But then what is a gentleman's agreement when the classical English gentleman appears to be an obsolete breed?

That anyone as intelligent as David Davies, of the FA, should declare that the Brazilian fiasco "will decide undisputably [sic] which is the best team in the world" defies belief and logic.

Keir Radnedge has powerfully pointed out elsewhere that there's not a shred of certainty that England will get the World Cup anyway, and, as FIFA head of communications Keith Cooper points out, United's trip to Brazil may do nothing at all for our 2006 hopes.

Such are the slimy machinations of international sports bodies. And, alas, not only they.

That Banks, our pipsqueak sports minister, should want United to take part, as he shamelessly pursues the 2006 mirage, was par for the course. Shamelessly, because, let it be yet again repeated, when merely on the opposition backbenches, he was squealing for the tournament to be given to South Africa.

What a difference winning an election and ministerial office, however unmerited, can make!

To give Manchester United their due, they showed no large enthusiasm for the synthetic affair, despite its apparent financial lure. When it was first proposed to them, manager Alex Ferguson stressed the burden it would put upon his players. But the FA, where there is a power vacuum at the moment, was quite ready to prostitute its own historic Cup with the aim of buttering up FIFA, Blatter and the relevant committee. The fear was that if United withdrew and allowed Bayern Munich (the losing European Cup finalists) to take their place, the Germans would endear themselves to Blatter and the committee, and enhance their hopes of staging 2006.

Could even Blatter (who does not, in any case, decide where the tournament is to be played) and FIFA be so childishly piqued, not least because it makes good sense for Bayern to go to Brazil while the Bundesliga is in its winter recess?

We know about Blairism, Bankism and the desperate governmental desire to be popular at all costs. But what right had the FA to sacrifice a major domestic competition?

Italians unmoved by allegations

JOE McGINNIS, well known for his exhaustive and lucrative investigations of crime, has published *The Miracle of Castel di Sangro*, the product of a whole year spent with that remarkable Italian club who somehow made their way into Serie B despite the fact that the population is a mere 5,000.

McGinnis tends to imply he is doing football a favour, reminding us that while beavering away in Italy he could have been earning megabucks by writing about the trial of another kind of footballer, and accused murderer, OJ Simpson.

Even so, the enterprise was a thoroughly unusual one, and late in the book McGinnis tells a distressing tale of alleged match fixing that tends to vitiate the little club's romance.

On the way to a Serie B match in Bari, he says he heard the players openly talking of how they planned to lose it and how they intended to keep the score against them down to three.

They tried to swear him to silence, he claims, but says he responded by telling them how deplorable he thought their plans.

Castel Di Sangro went on to lose the game 3-1, a result that enabled Bari to be promoted to the top division.

No great interest in these disclosures has been shown in Italy. In any case, Bari, the club of the Matarrese family – one brother is their president, the other was until recently the pompous president of the Italian FA – seem to survive such charges.

At the very end of last season came another suspect game: Reggina of Reggio Calabria against Torino, who had just confirmed a difficult promotion. Reggina contentiously won 2-1 in a game where Torino seemed, shall we say, somewhat detached.

What will happen? Nothing, I'm sure. The response to the recent death of that incorrigible trickster Italo Allodi, who has been hailed as saint rather than swindler, told us all we need to know, and rather more.

Star performer...Anelka stole the show in the 6-1 win at Middlesbrough last season

The saga of an eternal malcontent

THE DISPLEASING Nicolas Anelka saga has been full of ironies and paradoxes. The saga, you might say, of an eternal malcontent.

The first irony was that Arsenal, although properly piqued by the way Real Madrid dealt behind their back with the player and his brothers, had earlier whipped him away from Paris Saint-Germain for nothing, taking advantage of the ambiguities of European contract law.

True, they made a grace and favour payment to PSG of £500,000, but they did not legally need to.

Anelka flourished under Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, whom he admires, respects, and to whom he seems properly grateful. But his public complaints about Marc Overmars and Dennis Bergkamp seemed those of a spoiled child. Maybe he did believe – surely without basis – that they played only to one another, denying him the ball, but these are matters surely to be thrashed out in the dressing-room.

The reason Anelka gave for wanting to leave London was his unfair treatment by the English football press. On his arrival, he claimed, it had disparaged the transfer. Not guilty, I can claim, knowing as I did that he was one of the most exciting talents in French football.

Anelka, thin-skinned to a degree, also took issue with press allegations that Arsenal had not missed him when they thrashed Wimbledon 5-2 last season, but nothing was said about Bergkamp's absence when the Gunners went up to Middlesbrough and won 6-1, with Anelka the star. Such objections seem petty to a degree. But what possessed him to think that things would be any easier – indeed, anything like as cool and calm – with Real Madrid or Lazio? The media in Spain and Italy make ours look like pussy-cats.

The best thing Anelka's brothers could have done was to assuage his feeling of rejection and persecution, rather than to encourage his dreams of Real Madrid and the infinite difficulties of Spanish soccer.

Keep away from soccer, Salman

FOOTBALL has become fashionable. Oh, Lord, has it become fashionable. And heaven protect us from the literary intelligentsia who are now battening on to the game, in the evident, Ian Hamilton-like belief (oh, those ghastly Gazza books) that they are doing us a favour.

Martin Amis was sent by a Sunday newspaper to Barcelona, with those he plainly considered The Great Unwashed, to attend the European Cup Final. The response was a piece of prose so laboured and coagulated that it was almost indecipherable.

The *New Yorker* commissioned Salman Rushdie to tell its doubtless puzzled readers about the joy of being a Spurs fan. Embarrassment ensued.

I always have been wholly in Rushdie's corner over the fatwa, deplore the implicit barbarism, and do not begrudge a penny of the sums spent on protecting him. But to call Tottenham's latter-day giant, ex-player and manager, Bill Nicholson a *Scotsman*, when he came from Scarborough!

To say that Matt Busby died in the 1958 Munich air crash when he, though terribly injured, pulled through to manage again! Oh, Salman, Salman!

And what, you wonder, has happened to the famously nit-picking *New Yorker* fact-checkers, notorious for pestering contributors with a thousand minor queries? Do they feel that 'soccer' is beyond them or beneath them?

Or have they, in the recently concluded reign of controversial English editor Tina Brown, found themselves banished to obscurity? Tell us, please!

August 1986

ARGENTINA's victory in the 1986 World Cup was the major feature of the August issue of *World Soccer* that year. The front cover pictured an almost-cherubic Diego Maradona, and his major role in his country's victory was well documented inside. So was the supporting role played by his colleagues.

Brian Glanville, for one, extolled Jorge Valdano as the man of the Final, in which Argentina beat West Germany 3-2, and queried whether the Germans would have scored either of their goals if Jose Luis Brown, the big stopper who also headed Argentina's first, had been fully fit.

Brown played on despite a very painful shoulder injury – partly at his own insistence, partly because there was no central defender on the bench who could have replaced him.

As for England, who lost to Argentina in the 'Hand of God' quarter-final, Glanville revealed an incident that had been overlooked in the furore over Maradona's illegal first goal.

The England players also were incensed, he wrote, by Tunisian referee Bennaceur, who positioned himself on the end of the wall at a free-kick. When the ball was chipped towards John Barnes, it struck Bennaceur, thus denying the England player a clear chance.

England manager Bobby Robson was strongly criticised by Glanville, but not by Eric Batty. "Robson must stay" was the headline on his piece, and stay he did, for another four years.

Alex Ferguson also came in for some stick, in contrast to the adulation that has gone his way in recent times as Manchester United's boss. He was Scotland manager at the time, and Alex Gordon pointed out that he took five strikers to Mexico – Archibald, McAvennie, Nicholas, Sharp and Sturrock – who had scored a mere 13 international goals between them before the tournament, and failed to add to that tally during it.

Gordon rued the absence of Kenny Dalglish, kept out of a fourth World Cup through injury. "He just might have had a shot on target," he wrote.

Elsewhere in the issue: Partizan Belgrade were stripped of the Yugoslav title after ignoring an order from the FA to replay their final game because of alleged fixed results ...Michel Platini had seemingly reached the end of the road with France...and there was an obituary of Sir Stanley Rous, described as "the man who did more than any other to turn association football into the world game".

ROBSON MUST STAY

Eric Batty says

BRIAN GLANVILLE at the 1986 World Cup Finals

ARGENTINA APPROPRIATE CHAMPIONS...

PLATINI—IT'S OVER

by Keir Radnedge

WORLD CUP POST-MORTEM ... France by Andre Ducios

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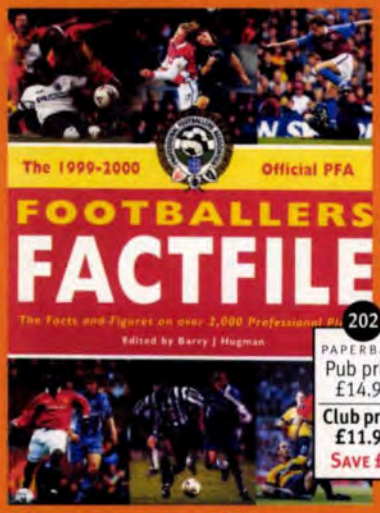

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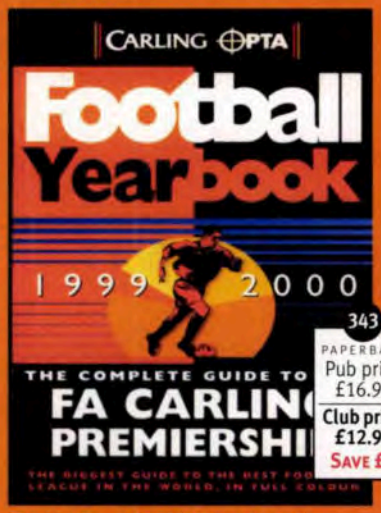

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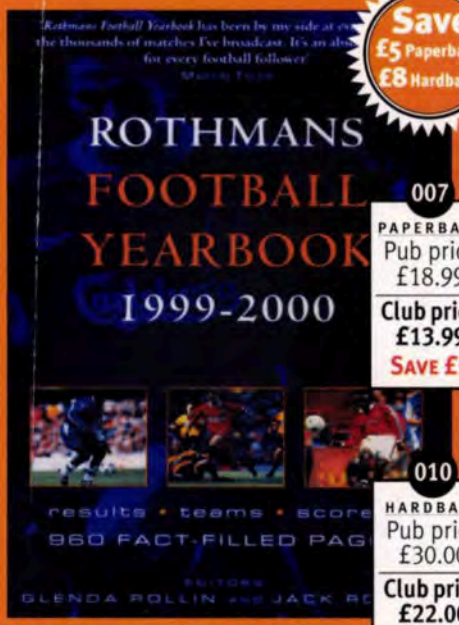

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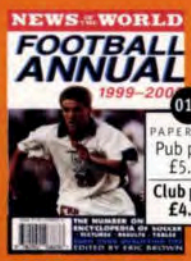

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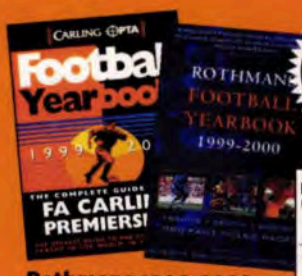

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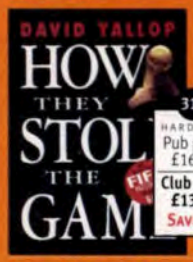

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